

SPACE WARS



TRANSGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE

Analysing transgression as a tool for critique, resistance and ultimately design

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PREFACE

In May 2019, I was in a small *socialistiskt bokcafé* in Lund called *India Däck*. After searching for some books which relate to architecture, I asked the an assistant for help. They went through a few books, and the one that caught my attention was a book called *The Autonomous City – A history of urban squatting*¹ by Alexander Vasudevan. Until this point, I had not considered squatting as a concept, nor how it was related to architecture. When I came to write my thesis, I wanted to see if I could make a connection between the two.

The term architect or designer usually conjures up an image of someone who uses their professional education and experience to solve spatial problems. Additionally, society relies on these humans to develop solutions for the design challenges such as urbanisation, climate change and social inequality. As a student of architecture and aspiring architect I can also be seen as one of these ‘humans’.

This is the assumption that parts of society have, and it is partially correct. To be more precise it is 1% correct. I remember watching a talk by Architect Alastair Parvin in which he states that 99% of architects design for the 1% richest people in the world². These figures have always stuck in my mind.

The exhibition by the MoMA which led to the book titled *Architecture Without Architects* steps “outside the narrowly defined discipline that has governed our sense of architectural history, and discusses the art of building as a universal phenomenon”³. The book presents us with architecture not produced by professionals but by the action of people working within a community of experience. As the hundreds and thousands of years went by, transgression has been at the heart of these types of design and construction. As buildings evolved it was necessary to transgress the acts of previous generations.

The knowledge we can obtain from them, not only considers economic and aesthetic factors, but touches upon the much trickier problem of how to live and let live. Much of the design in my case study was accomplished in a similar fashion, and therefore I wanted to mention in this preface the importance of learning from people who do not call themselves architects or designers.

1 (Vasudevan, 2017)

2 (Parvin, 2013)

3 (Rudofsky, 1964) Introduction



Figure 01
*The air-conditioners
of Hyderabad Sind
which was part of The
Architecture Without
Architects project*

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01

INTRODUCTION

“SO, CAN WE ACCEPT AN ILLEGAL VENTURE LIKE THIS, WHICH HAS TAKEN AWAY SPACE OWNED BY THE DEMOCRATIC STATE? SHOULD WE APPLAUD IT, FOR BOOSTING CULTURE AND HELPING MINORITIES? IT’S A QUESTION WHOSE SIDE YOU’RE ON IN THE SPACE WAR”

*- Jacob Stubbe Østergaard
(2013)*

Early on while conducting my research I came across the essay *The Right To The City*⁴ and the article *Freetown Christiania And The Space War*⁵. Both use the term *Space Wars* in connection to my case study, so I decided to steal it for the title of my thesis.

The term *Space Wars* was coined by sociologist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman⁶ to describe the way in which space is fabricated has turned into a power play. The fabricators are those who are in positions of power and wishing to homogenise cities to fit a specific narrative. This does not offer much room for space to be interpreted, used, and developed in any different way. However, this war has a resistance army: transgressors.

Transgression has as its core the exceeding of due bounds or limits. There are people who, sometimes without even knowing it, push the boundaries of space. Anyone who has ever protested or completed an ollie over a set of steps has been part of the resistance army. In doing so they use the act of transgression to construct and deconstruct space to fit their own notions of how an urban setting should be utilized.

It should be noted that transgression is an act of disobedience; therefore, the purpose of this thesis is not to glorify any sort of transgression. However, the term can provide us with a valuable source in which to investigate architecture and challenge its accepted norms and practices.

For my case study I chose to select a site which has been using architectural and spatial transgression in their own *Space War*. What we see in Freetown Christiania, is how space has been used and most importantly, misused space to construct their own narrative. Throughout its history, Christiania has been “fighting against normalisation and for their version of the right to the city”⁷.

This project will open pandoras box and give a small insight into how transgression can be used in the context of architecture.



Figure 02
*Skater transgressing
over a set of steps*

4 (Hansen, 2011)

5 (Østergaard, 2013)

6 (Bauman, 1998, p. 31)

7 (Hansen, 2011, p. 194)

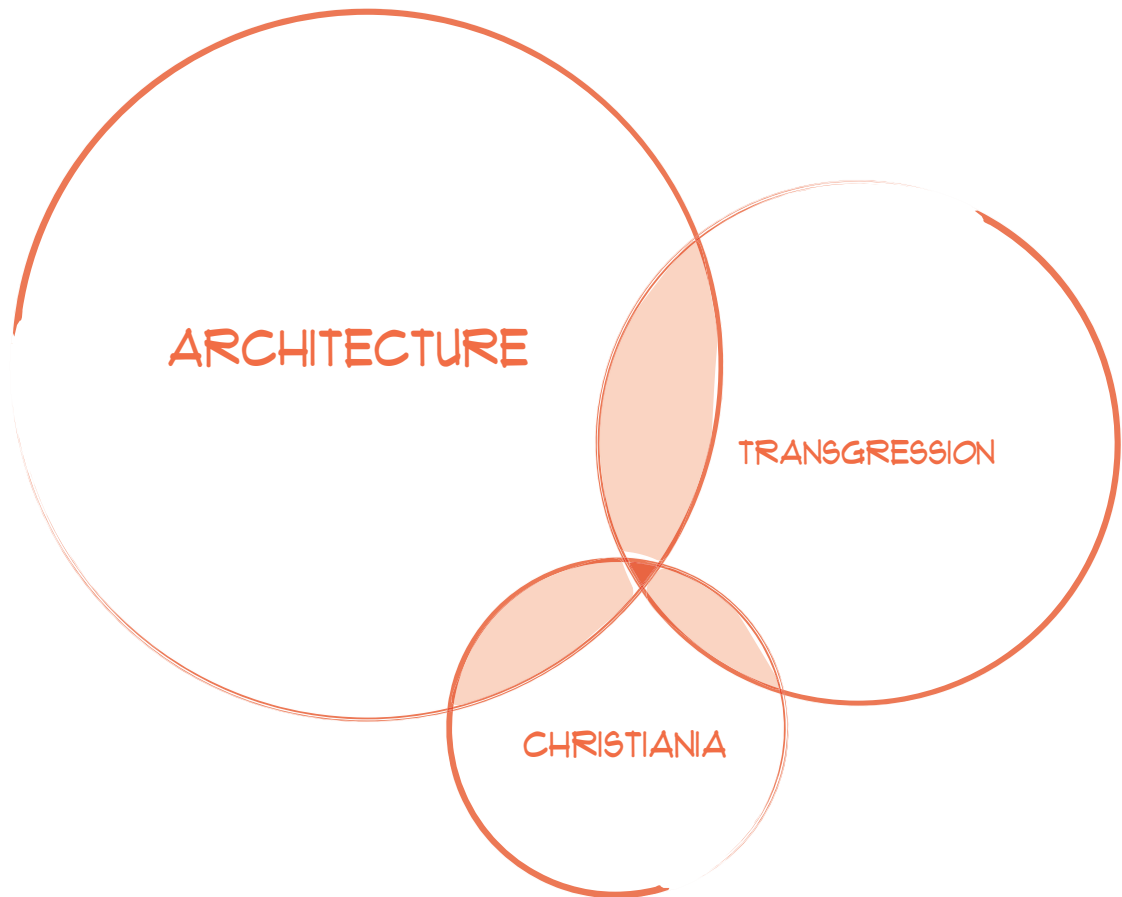


Figure 03
*Venn diagram of project
description. My project
becomes the narrow
intersection of the
three main subjects*

TO SQUAT

Freetown Christiania has become one of the most notable squats in Northern Europe. For this reason and because the topic of squatting was the starting point of my thesis, I feel that it is important to clarify what is meant by this term. Squatting is the illegal occupation of property and/or land, without the previous consent of its owner, which could be public institution, a particular individual, a private corporation or any sort of organisation⁸ (Fig. 4, 5 & 6). Around one billion people are squatting in houses or on land worldwide⁹, accounting for one person in every seven.

As I will mention further on in this text, acts of transgression come in many forms within the urban landscape. With that said, I believe that squatting is the boldest of these acts. In many countries, squatting is still a crime, and creates a conflict between the owner (in this case the state) and the occupants. Squatting is a response to a problem, but it is also the most radical one. It is a disobedience of the natural order and should be represented as so.

It is important not to romanticise the act of squatting and to not overlook the problems it brings. Squatters have been known to live this beautiful co-existence with each other, but this fantasy is exactly just that, a fantasy. In addition to the problems violence, drug abuse and exploitation of individuals, the conditions in which they live; often without heating, lighting and lack of hygiene, are not the most desirable living conditions in the modern society we live in.

Not only is squatting the most radical of transgressions, I believe it is also the action that most changes the balance of power. In the times we live in, everything including space is judged based on its ability to create profit and the increased private ownership of land and architecture gives a greater power to the owner compared to those who are left behind. Therefore, it is difficult to argue against the importance that property has in our society. Even back in 1848, Marx and Engels place property at the centre of what they believe to be societal problems in *The Communist Manifesto*; “the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property”¹⁰. What they state is that power and property are interconnected. They therefore argue that only when property is converted into common property that power can be taken from the hands

8 (Cattaneo & Martinez, 2014, p. 2)

9 (Neuwirth, 2004) (at time of research)

10 (Marx & Engels, 1848, p. 85)



Figure 04
*Can Masdeu: squatted
 social centre,
 residence and community
 garden on the outskirts
 of Barcelona*



Figure 05
*Roma squat in Malmö
 which was destroyed
 by police in 2015*



Figure 06
*Squat in the
 historical building of
 Poortgebouw, Rotterdam*

of a select few and put into the hands of everyone. Ideologically speaking, the buildings in Christiania have this concept; the collective right of use. They go against the private ownership and in favour of mutual housing concept.

As you will find out later on in this text, transgression is about asking *why* and squatting does this by questioning the issues of purchase, property and ownership.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

QUESTIONS

How can transgression be used to break social and spatial norms?

What is the importance of transgression in architecture, design and urbanism?

How can transgression provide the blueprint for architectural exploration and ultimately design?

How can we look at a case study as a source of inspiration for architectural transgression?

HYPOTHESIS

Transgression can give architects and designers a different avenue in which to explore and eventually design projects both within individual projects but also within their role in society. Many times architectural transgressions are used as form of resistance, and it is important to resist the normative world, in search for social change and progress. Transgression can in this way I want to understand if it is possible to change the way in which most architects operate. There are lessons that can be learnt from a case study such as Freetown Christiania. By doing so I can be learn from agents who use transgression to form their own notions of space should be used. By looking deeper into this subject area, it will be possible to having a greater understanding how transgression can be used by architects, designers, and anyone with the ability to mould space. Although this thesis is primarily aimed at people within the profession, I would also like emphasise that anyone has the ability to mould space and architectural boundaries. However, because as this the specific role of us architects, we as professionals should take special considerations.

METHODOLOGY

THEORETICAL

As mentioned previously, squatting/informal settlements were the starting point of my thesis. From here I was introduced to the notion of transgression which allowed me to look into the breaking of social and spatial norms. Therefore I did not begin this project with any preconceived knowledge of transgression. Therefore, it was important to understand and be guided by this complex topic of transgression. My theoretical work engages primarily with two discussions bearing on the understanding of transgression: 1) looking at the broad field of scholarly writings by philosophers and sociologists about transgression. 2) Investigating work written by architects about the relationship between architecture and transgression. This work was crucial to understanding what is meant by transgression and how this may relate to my case study. Once this theory was investigated, parallel fields of study were explored to give the original field of study more theoretical support.

Although the subject matter is complex, it was my intention to simplify its meaning and relationships with the physical world. It can to some extent be seen as a indiscretion to simplify such theories, however this is not a philosophical or sociological so I believed this was the best method to explain the significance of transgression in society and more importantly architecture. Taking inspiration from the subject matter of this thesis I also decided to some degree transgress the norms of architectural literature. The writing is slightly more informal than the 'conventional' architectural scholarly work, with the purpose of making it more appealing, especially to those who are not within the field of architecture.

EMPIRICAL WORK

Only with the base of theoretical knowledge could I then begin to find moments of transgression within my case study. There were various reasons why I chose to use Freetown Christiania as my case study. Its proximity and to where I was studying was a contributing factor in choosing it as my case study, however it is has also the elements which I discovered during my theoretical research, about its unconventional use of space. Starting out as a squat, it has surpassed even its own expectations, by continuously transgressing moral, economic and architectural limits.

As preparation for my fieldwork I explored the history of the case-study to have a better understanding of the why transgression occurred and still occurs on the selected site. This historical information mostly came from books where residents and researchers had noted stories and created photographic evidence of what has been happening on the site for the last 50 years. There were also various documentaries conducted over the years about Christiania and this was also helpful in obtaining knowledge from residents.

Due to the broad nature transgression, some caution was needed to find the information which could be helpful within the field of architecture. This was accompanied by articles and papers that explored theoretical notions of spatial struggles within Christiania. Due to the longevity of the case study and its notoriety, there is a large body of work exploring the issues concerning the site. Therefore, it was necessary to restrict the information to that concerning architecture, and even further to concentrate on transgression.

FIELD WORK

As part of my research it was important to visit the site, and spend a considerable time there. For this I applied to stay at the CRIR (Christiania Researcher in Residence) house, where I was able to stay there for two weeks. The CRIR “offers residency for artists and academic researchers with a specific interest in Christiania as an important field of study. The aim of the Christiania Researcher in Residence project is to involve artists, researchers and academics in an open, critical and reflective dialog around the free town Christiania, and to feed new creative and critical thinking back to the community and into the public realm globally. Christiania’s insight and experience into local organization, alternative architecture, lifestyle, culture, sustainable environments, quality of life, democracy and innovation is unique in the world and could generate important knowledge that may inspire alternative urban thinking.”¹¹

Initially I was only supposed to stay one week, but due to the scale of the research necessary I extended for an extra week. Obviously the time I spent there was just a drop in the ocean of a story that has had its beginnings in the 1970’s so I am in a very limited position to talk about Christiania, and therefore all my ethnographical research should be taken with a pinch of salt. None the less it was possible to create a comparably extensive insight of its story of architectural transgression.

At this point I would like to mention a resident who I had the most contact within Christiania; Emmerick. He is both a part of the group of people who organise the CRIR and works at the construction office which deals with all the building works on the site. With his help I was able to obtain various connections and a large amount of information.

Diary

My previous research led me to divide the architectural interventions in Christiania into three typologies; *space war barracks*, *guerrilla wagons* and *rebel architecture*. These are not official typologies, and the names came from a mixture of history and the intention of making them fit into my *space wars* narrative. With these pre-prepared

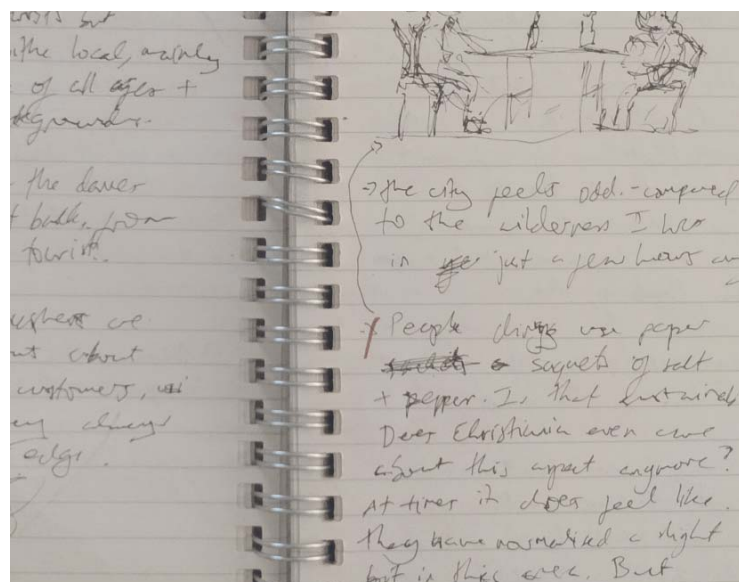
¹¹ (CRIR, 2004)

typologies, I set about finding one building from each to focus on and explore. Due to the time constraints and the scale of the site of study, it was not possible to pick and choose the exact buildings which would best fit my thesis. Another issue was that I had to find people who were willing to allow me to interview and take photographs of their homes. Emmerick helped me make the appointments for the *space war barrack* and the *guerrilla wagon*, and I set about trying to find a piece of *rebel architecture* which I could use.

During my period there I focused on three buildings; *kaktushus* (*space war barrack*), *kamufletet vogn* (*guerrilla wagon*) and *6 sans* (*rebel architecture*). The fieldwork was conducted by interviewing the residents who lived in the building for about an hour, I would then reflect on what I had learnt and double back by visiting again. The interviews were conducted in a very informal manner, over a coffee, with the aim of letting the residents talk about the building.

Apart from these three, I would I walk around the site, and find buildings that I found intriguing, with the prospect of being allowed to have a look inside and talk to the residents about where they lived. My main lines of inquiry were to do with the history of the building and how it came to be this way. On other occasions I would try to make use of any opportunity I was presented with to talk to anyone I could, whether that be residents, workers or people who are just visiting the site. In these situations transgression was always in the back of my mind, and because of the broad canopy which the term falls under, it was easy to find examples within these interviews.

Figure 07
Extract from notebook
used on site



Seeing as I had as my aim to make this part of the project a narrative, I would just have a conversation with people many times not even about my thesis. Within these conversations I would pick up parts here and there which would be useful for my project.

When it was not possible to talk to the *actors*, I would often find a place to sit and take notes, about the atmosphere, the space and way people were using the space. Along with this, when walking around I would also take notes of a phenomenological nature which was mostly visual and auditive. I was constantly looking at the site through 'transgression tinted glasses', which perhaps made me judge the space differently to if I was just visiting. Although I had already visited Christiania in the past in the role of tourist, this experience was different as I was really able to peel back the layers and explore it as a phenomenon.

From these interviews and experiences I was able to sit down at least once a day and write as much I could both from notes and from memories, to create a diary of my experiences in the form of a diary. Not all of it was useful for this project and therefore a lot has been left out of the text. However, there are instances where I found the information too interesting to not be included in my research, even if it does not have a tangible connection to my line of research.

Photography

In addition to the diary, imagery was a key factor in my research, in order to support my findings. When visiting the case studies, I was able to take pictures, before, during and after conducting the interview. This was especially useful when the residents would talk about certain aspects of the building.

I would often go out on site with no other purpose than to walk around and take pictures of the buildings and spaces. Even though I did this once a day during a period of two weeks, the scale of the site meant it was not possible to document every building, however the quantity of photos was sufficient for my argument. In general, the purpose of these pictures is to see what can happen when transgression and architecture are mixed. When permitted I also asked if it would be possible to take pictures of the interior of some of the homes, especially those which I felt would have significance for my project. These photographs were

important to show what the term transgression means in the context of architecture.

Mapping

Before conducting my fieldwork, I already had obtained a CAD drawings from the site from the Copenhagen land registry. This gave me a slight understanding of the space but it was only really when I was walking around could I have a greater understanding of what I was seeing on the screen. Technical site plan in DWG from the building office in Christiania, which showed the location of all buildings, paths and services. This map also included buildings which have been recently demolished which was useful when talking about the current situation on the site.

I started to understand that each part of the site had a different feel, so I would sketch over a plan to map this out. This was purely on how I perceived the areas based on general knowledge of urban & landscape typologies. The final map can be found in section: *there's beauty in transgression*.

02

DEEPER INTO
TRANSGRESSION

'TRANSGRESSION DOES NOT SEEK TO OPPOSE ONE THING TO ANOTHER, NOR DOES IT ACHIEVE ITS PURPOSE THROUGH MOCKERY OR BY UPSETTING THE SOLIDITY OF FOUNDATIONS; IT DOES NOT TRANSFORM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MIRROR, BEYOND AN INVISIBLE AND UNCROSSABLE LINE, INTO A GLITTERING EXPANSE. TRANSGRESSION IS NEITHER VIOLENCE IN A DIVIDED WORLD NOR A VICTORY OVER LIMITS; AND EXACTLY FOR THIS REASON, ITS ROLE IS TO MEASURE THE EXCESSIVE DISTANCE THAT IT OPENS AT THE HEART OF THE LIMIT AND TO TRACE THE FLASHING LINE THAT CAUSES THE LIMIT TO ARISE.'

- Michel Foucault
(1977)

There is a tendency in society to homogenise what it finds familiar and comfortable, whilst excluding that which it finds disagreeable. This was the case of modernity until the end of the 19th century, where Nietzsche writes that “There is nothing I want more than to become enlightened about the whole highly complicated system of antagonisms that constitute the ‘modern world’”. In this way the term *modern* meant the oppressing of bodily energies and creativity, whilst thwarting the generation of stronger entities and a more vigorous society and culture. As academic theorist Douglas Kellner notes “Nietzsche developed one of the first sustained critiques of mass culture and society, the state, and bureaucratic discipline and regimentation, producing perspectives that deeply influenced later discourses of modernity”.¹²

Then came the 20th century which looked to shake-up this homogeneity, with the birth of modernism & postmodernism. “A primary, albeit unintentional feature of modernity is the desire to transcend limits – limits that are physical, racial, aesthetic, sexual, legal, national and moral.”¹³ This occurs in the most radical instances of music, art, film, and literature which has their role to question society (Fig. 8, 9, 10).

Although transgression is part of human development, the word has so far eluded many people and until a few months ago I would have been in the category. Usually when I explained my topic to others, they would more than often ask what I meant by transgression. A simplified way to describe transgression is to the intentional breaking of a law or rule. However, opposed to a criminal act the breaking of these rules has more to do with breaching norms, traditions, or conventions. When transgressing, someone or something should challenge, provoke, or subvert accepted norms.

In order to test whether my description of transgression was accessible, I set about creating a small side project. This comprised of business cards which explained both the term and how it connected to architecture, and my case study.

It is important to understand that transgression gives us the opportunity to question what we believe. Just like the inquisitive child who continuously asks *why* to everything, the aim of transgression is to critique and question the norm. Usually in these situations, the adult tends to either explain the situation, or make up some story about where babies come from. If we are the child in the situation we can either accept the story we are told or use mischief to search out the truth.

¹² (Kellner, 1991, p. 33)

¹³ (Mosley & Sara, 2013, p. 21)



Figure 08
The Clockwork Orange - film from the novel of the same title employs disturbing and violent images.



Figure 09
Rhythm 0 - Artist Abramovic standing still while the audience was invited to do to her whatever they wished.



Figure 10
Punk bands rejected the perceived excesses of mainstream 1970s rock

There is something inherently mischievous and pervasive about the act of transgression. It is a radical position to take, and for the same reason “it also implies renewal and creativity, as the outsider position inherently leads to new and alternative ways of seeing, understanding and being”¹⁴.

From an architectural standpoint, transgression comes in many forms within a cityscape. Protests, occupation, conflict, resistance, informal settlements, riots, carnivals, graffiti and skateboarding are all acts which can be deemed as transgression. Within the urban landscape transgression can push the boundaries of accepted architectural and spatial endeavour.

Architects are in fact humans and as humans they have an inherent desire for stability, but transgression destabilises ideas and systems. As Architects Jonathan Mosley & Rachel Sara put it, architecture has the opportunity “to break free of its role in domesticating society’s deepest fears, to on occasion sever its bondage in order to change, challenge as well as reflect society’s ideals”¹⁵.

¹⁴ (Sara & Littlefield, 2015, p. 297)

¹⁵ (Mosley & Sara, 2013, p. 37)

In the 1970's, architect Bernard Tschumi wrote about how architecture cannot survive without transgression in his essay named *Architecture and Transgression*: "there is no social or political change without the movements and programmes that transgress supposedly stable institutionality – architectural or otherwise; that there is no architecture without everyday life, movement, and action; and that it is the most dynamic aspects of their disjunctions that suggest a new definition of architecture"¹⁶ Transgression is an integral part of life, and therefore architecture must transgress in order for it to be an integral part of society.

With that said, transgression nevertheless manages to be a word that often neglected in discussions around architecture. Many of the principles surrounding architecture which have become part of the norm claim that architecture is about stability, solidity and a foundation of principles. In the last few decades terms such as *program*, *use* and *function* have become fashionable in the vocabulary. Although terms such as these still have a place in the discipline's language, as much as you try to throw these words at architecture and make them stick, they just do not. This is because architecture is constantly unstable and perpetually on the verge of change.

Architecture is a constant conflict between the creation of space and the use of it. The unavoidable confrontation between these two terms means that stability in architecture is not possible. If transgression is about creating instability, it becomes a valuable asset as a way critiquing, resisting and designing. If architecture is just too unstable, I suggest we embrace instability with open arms like a long-lost friend.

Figure 11
 Advertisements for
 Architecture by Bernard
 Tschumi, a series
 of postcard-sized
 juxtapositions of words
 and images. Each was
 a manifesto of sorts,
 confronting the dissociation
 between the immediacy of
 spatial experience and
 the analytical definition
 of theoretical concepts

16 (Tschumi, 1996, p. 23)

**To really appreciate architecture,
you may even need to commit
a murder.**



The High Window 1941

Architecture is defined by the actions it witnesses as much as by the enclosure of its walls. Murder in the Street differs from Murder in the Cathedral in the same way as love in the street differs from the Street of Love. Radically.

LIMIT TO TRANSGRESSION

The word transgression has its origins in the Latin; the word *Transgressus* meaning ‘I step across’¹⁷. This is in-line with the common narrative where a boundary must be crossed for transgression to occur. A boundary can be understood as a real or imagined line that marks the edge or limit of something.

We may think of a boundary in terms of a fence gate or a ‘no entry’ sign, however the relationship between transgression and boundary is more complex than stepping over a line. During *The Transgression Project*, Sara & Littlefield came to understand the term transgression “as less of a boundary that one crosses (a limit beyond which one ought not to venture) and more of a boundary line that has width”¹⁸

This is backed by philosopher Michel Foucault view that “Transgression, then, is not related to the limit as black to white, the prohibited to the lawful, the outside to the inside, or as the open area of a building to its enclosed spaces. Rather, their relationship takes the form of a spiral which no simple infraction can exhaust”¹⁹.

Both quotes demonstrate, how transgression cannot be interpreted as a *true* or *false* statement but more as *maybe*. There is room to breathe and explore within this boundary and with this ability to breathe comes new life. Therefore, I believe it may be wiser to consider the present-day expression of transgression as ‘I stretch from within’ - the understanding that when transgressing, one does not step over any limit, but stretches and plays with it.



Figure 12

17 (etymonline, n.d.)

18 (Sara & Littlefield, 2015) - p.

19 (Foucault, 1977, p. 35)

FINDING THE LIMIT

Work which is produced at the limits of a particular field, whether that be music, literature, film or architecture can reveal additional interpretations and hidden elements within the subject area. By exploring the limits, we can see what lies in-between these boundaries. It can question, contradict, and show the paradoxes within the specific field. These works are rare and “provide isolated episodes within amidst the mainstream of commercial production”²⁰

Foucault tells us that “Transgression carries the limit right to the limit of its being; transgression forces the limit to face the fact of its imminent disappearance”.²¹ If we think of the limit as a line which lies in front us, we can use transgression push the line until it becomes a dot in the distance to society. Eventually this same society catches up.

It is important to note that you can take only take transgression to the limit. Going beyond it is dangerous and therefore there should be some caution involved while conducting acts of transgression. Tim Cresswell similarly warns us that “Transgression has limits. Constant transgression is permanent chaos”²². As previously mentioned protesting is type of transgression. Although protesting is an integral part of modern society, as it has the role of questioning society, it can also bring about chaos. If transgression is about pushing boundaries, there have been instances when peaceful protests have turned violent because the transgression never stopped and exceeded the breaking point. This then cannot be thought of as an act of mischief but as one of sin. It is important not to overdo it and know where the limit is. Therefore, it is important use transgression until its limit. So, where is the limit?

Rules can give us guidance to where these limits land. In today’s world, rules touch upon every aspect of our lives. Rules can come in the form of laws such those enforced by a political authority or a rule can be simply of not letting a child walk around with shoes on in the house, usually dictated and enforced by parents. Architecture is no different. We have rules that are taught at schools, which are the foundations of how architects design and then there are rules that ‘have to’ be enforced. The Danish Bygningsreglementet (building Regulations) has nearly 600 sections, outlining what architecture can and cannot do²³.

20 (Tschumi, 1996, p. 103)

21 (Foucault, 1977, p. 34)

22 (Cresswell, 1996, p. 166)

23 (The Danish Transport, 2020)

It is also impossible to live our day to day life without having to deal with some social rule. These are not specifically dictated or enforced by one person, but by society itself. In this way, we the people are our own rule makers. Although you may think that most rules come in the form of laws, and are policed from the outside, limits to our actions are more likely individual responses to moral constraints that stem from within us and the people who we interact with.

It must be noted that rules only give us a guidance and what classifies as transgression, is always prone to being subjective. Therefore, the most extreme but most effective way to make limits dynamic, is to transgress these rules.

Bondage

As stated before, architecture works primarily within a set of paradigms that are both taught at schools and established within architectural laws. During a lecture in my bachelors we were told that architecture was similar 'bondage'. After years I have come to realise that, transgression lies at the core of this of this unlikely metaphor.

Tschumi talks about how knots in bondage are similar to the rules in architecture. "These rules, like so many knots that cannot be united, are generally a paralysing constraint. When manipulated, however, they have the erotic significance of bondage... What matters is that there is no simple bondage technique; the more numerous and sophisticated the restraints, the greater the pleasure"²⁴. Transgression does not have as its aim to break the rules of architecture and society but use them until their limits. It is in these limits that we can find pleasure.

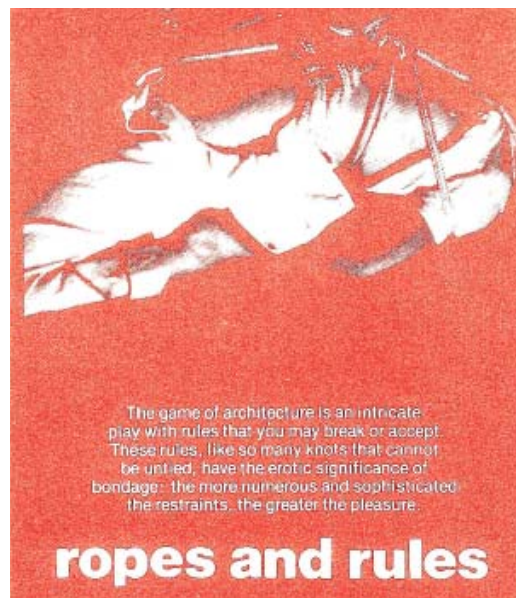


Figure 13
Part of the Advertisements
for Architecture series
by Bernard Tschumi

²⁴ (Tschumi, 1996, p. 88)

We must work within them and stretch the binds until there limits and be careful not to break the binds, as to not ruin the fun.

TRANSGRESSION DEPENDS

One of the most important things to note about transgression is that it is subjective: “While the aberrant nature of transgression implies bad behaviour, the act in itself is not inherently good or bad; it is society which brands it one way or the other”²⁵, meaning that It is usually society which dictates what is seen as right or wrong. Therefore, what is deemed as transgression changes depending on perspective and is constantly fluctuating.

The example used to explain this was that of homosexuality. To participate in a homosexual act would have been considered a transgression throughout most of Europe in the early twentieth century. Whereas now in the early twenty-first century, it is accepted both by law and by most of society²⁶ (Fig. 14). Once an activity is no longer deemed to be mischievous, pervasive, and extravagant, it loses its status as an act of transgression. This then just shows us how an act of transgression can become part of the norm.



Figure 14
The Stonewall Riots of 1969 when New York City police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay club located in Greenwich Village. These protests for gay right led to the Pride parades.

²⁵ (Sara & Littlefield, 2015, p. 297)

²⁶ (Sara & Littlefield, 2015)

Although I am encouraging norms to be stretched, I am also aware that there are reasons they exist. “The conformist reflex was undoubtedly crucial in our hunter-gatherer past; indeed non-conformity can be disastrous”²⁷. The example psychologist Elliot Aronson gives, is of driving a car on the wrong side of the road. It would not be the smartest way of trying to rebel against the norm especially if a conformist car started driving towards in on the right side. “Non-conformists make for interesting stories... and as much as you admire them in history or in movies, our daily transactions we tend to prefer the conformist”.²⁸

As soon as an action is not regarded to be mischievous, pervasive and extravagant, it can no longer be deemed an act of transgression and thus moves into the territory of the norm. This is not to say that the action should stop, but there should come a point when it is no longer considered a transgression, and therefore becomes the norm. However, this then becomes a paradox, where this new norm must be challenged until the transgression then becomes the norm. This new norm must be challenged until the transgression then becomes the norm. This new norm must be challenged until the transgression then becomes the norm...

We can find another paradox in transgression. Chris Jenks tells us that “... any limit on conduct carries with it an intense relationship with the desire to transgress that limit”.²⁹ The more rules you put in place, the more we want to transgress them; If transgression is about rebellion, these actions become more attractive if there is more to rebel against. Thus, peculiarly by having limits, we create an intense desire to transgress those limits.

In both these examples of we see that transgression cannot be static, but rather something dynamic.

27 (Aronson, 2003, p. 141)

28 (Aronson, 2003, p. 139)

29 (Jencks, 2013, p. 7)

SPATIAL TRANSGRESSION

The word *place* is an interesting one in the English language. In the book *In Place / Out of Place*, Tim Cresswell tells us that there are many occasions when we can use the word *place* “one some occasions the word *place* to refer to a building or location... On other occasions the word *place* turns up in common phrases such as... ‘know your *place*’ or ‘she was put in her *place*’ which have a very different connotation”.³⁰ In these instances, *place* does not refer to a specific space but to a *place* in society. Many times, these are not brought about by rules or laws, rather they are “expectations about behaviour that relate a position in a social structure to actions in space”³¹

I thought it might be interesting to substitute the word *place* with one of its synonyms; ‘know your *space*’ or ‘she was put in her *space*’. This conjugates a more physical image in our head about expectations of behaviour that relate a position in society to a position in space. Therefore, *space* as well as *place* can be used to represent social structures. These structures, whether physical or mental, can be created, reproduced and defended.

A moment of transgression marks the shift from the accepted norm of a space towards a challenge of its function in society. Changes in space can be used to shape the normative world, but they can also be used to interrogate this same world. In architecture, transgression is a prominent method of interrogating space and question the relation between *place* and *space*.

Space has an important role to play when dealing with power relation. The qualities of space make them powerful strategic tools of power but can also help make acts of resistance highly visible and often appear outrageous. By continuously repeating the way we create, organise, and interact with space, we reinforce the established norms. Acts of transgression can direct us (intentionally or unintentionally) to issues in social and spatial structures.

³⁰ (Cresswell, 1996, p. 3)

³¹ (Cresswell, 1996, p. 3)

TACTICS VS STRATEGIES

We live increasingly in a world which attempts to create strategies for everything, and architecture is no different. Strategies can be useful but carry with them ideologies that can only lead to homogeneity, by putting everything in its right *place*. As architects Petrescu & Petcou mention “everyday life practices like dwelling, cooking, walking, reading and so on... are all tactical in their nature as they are improvised and take advantage of all opportunities afforded them.”³² These are the types of daily moments that strategies cannot account for.

We can look at the game of chess in order to get a better understanding of the two. Just like chess, architecture deals with the manipulation of geometry, with the use of tactics and strategies.

A strategy “is about ideas you will develop over the course of the game, such as protecting your king or developing a particular pawn structure”³³. In general, a strategy deals with putting long-term schemes in place and therefore it is important tool of control. The problem is that tactics have a way of getting in the way of strategies.

A tactic in contrast, “are short sequences of moves that should result in some tangible gain, like capturing an opponent’s piece or moving your own into a more favourable position”³⁴. They are calculated actions determined by the absence of a particular position, point, or place. No limitations are put on this action, thus, allowing it to be autonomous in nature.

In this way tactics must accept “the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment. It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse”³⁵. Various tactics can happen in the same location and must work both with the environment that is imposed on it, and with other tactics. There is no time to plan because the environment may change, or a different tactic may come into play.

Lefebvre also gives us his impression on tactics; “Whoever says ‘strategies’ says the hierarchy of ‘variables’ to be considered, some having a strategic capacity and others remaining at the tactical level – and says also the power to realize these strategies on the ground”.³⁶

32 (Petrescu & Petcou, 2013, p. 60)

33 (Kasparov, 2019)

34 (Kasparov, 2019)

35 (Certeau, 1984, p. 37)

36 (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 154)

Each time there is a new strategy put in place, it questions the structures between the immediate (individual) and daily relations of existing society. In this way space for integration, play and transgression should be allowed.

Transgression's role is to break up these strategies and offer an alternative to the 'planned'. The difference between tactics and strategies highlights the role of architecture in an urban environment. Yes, overall strategies in cities can be put in place, however only with the use architectural tactics can we take into account the nuances of everyday life.



Figure 15

Activists playing chess at the Battle of Ryesgade: A nine-day series of street fights in 1986, in the Copenhagen between squatters and police.

THE VOID

Maps can describe places, in terms of historical sites, topography or navigation. However, they cannot be used to describe spaces, as no number of maps can be used to decode all the meaning behind them.

In *The Dead Zone and the Architecture of Transgression*, Gil M Doron notes that "During the last 50 years or so... the discourse and practice

of architecture and planning has been perplexed with peculiar spaces in the built environment, which have been labelled 'wastelands', 'derelict areas', 'No man's land', 'Dead Zones', urban 'voids', 'Terrain vague' etc."³⁷ This text goes on to talk about how voids do not exist in our cities³⁸. Even though they are often labelled on planning office maps in such manners, they do not give an adequate understanding of the place. Areas can appear empty and unused, however it can be argued that no place is a void, and are often just described in such a way in order to justify the ulterior motive of forced urban development.

It has more to do with one's perspective that defines how we see and feel about a space. If squatters or the homeless live in these places they can be seen as a home. If graffiti is etched on the walls, the voids are now transformed into places of expression. If sado-masochists use them as playgrounds in order to explore sexuality, these spaces have a deeper meaning. By committing acts of transgression in these 'voids', the agents shape and become part of them, and therefore the emptiness is taken away and the term 'void' can no longer be used. As architects we can take advantage of these voids and amplify their place in society.

In 1969 military barracks were closed in Copenhagen, and two years later a vast number of people established themselves in this 'void' and created a society we now know today as *Fristanden Christiania*.

37 (Doron, 2010, p. 2)

38 (Doron, 2010, p. 2)

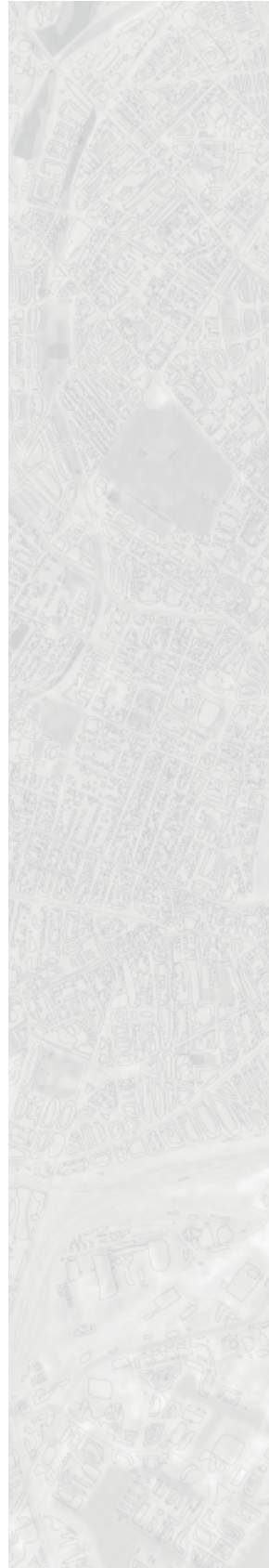
03

TALE OF
TRANSGRESSION

“I CONSIDER MYSELF A NORMAL PERSON AND I COULD SAY THAT I REPRESENT THE OPINION FROM DANISH PEOPLE, I RESPECT THAT CHRISTIANIA SHOULD BE THERE I THINK IT’S A GOOD IDEA THAT THERE IS A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN BREAK THE RULES... I DON’T MEAN BREAK THE RULES BUT GO TO THE LIMIT AND DEVELOP THINGS THAT WE DON’T DO, THAT I DON’T DO. SO, I THINK IT’S A GOOD PLACE IN A SOCIETY THAT WE HAVE ROOM FOR THIS”

*- Deputy Chief Superintendent of Danish
National Police, Lars Haugaard
(2014)*

Figure 16
*Site Map of Freetown
Christiania*



Occupying a prime city-centre in Copenhagen, in Freetown's geographical location at the urban core makes it fascinating spatial study. Many times, these cultural sites have either disappeared or are far removed geographically from an urban setting. Here it still lives and breathes and has slowly become the alternative cultural heart of Copenhagen.





Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Eventually, after bumping into Nina she took me to the Christiania Researcher in Residence (CRIR) house (Fig. 17), which I only then realised was on a wagon somehow sitting on top of a large concrete plinth. I still wonder how it got up there. This area had a completely different feel to where I had first entered Christina, it was calm and peaceful. I followed her up something that vaguely represented steps with no handrails (Fig. 19). You could tell that this wagon had been extended, changed and been re-done over time, with the marks of previous researchers.

IN THE BEGINNING

This part of the text will focus on how Christiania came into being. Transgression does not come into fruition out of the blue but is born from the critical response to a set of circumstances. In the same manner, Christiania's story was a response to a specific set conditions, therefore it is important to start from the beginning and ask *why* this autonomous area came into being.

FIRST BLOOD

Although Freetown Christiania was established as a squat, this is was not how its story of transgression began. On the 18th May 1971, a small part of the hoarding around the ex-military base was broken down (Fig. 21). A local group of activists destroyed a fence and set up a playground in the corner of the recently evacuated old barracks. The activists had no way of knowing that by breaking down the fence, 50 years on one of the most prominent autonomous areas in Europe would be established.

In his book *Doorway*, Professor of Architecture Simon Unwin talks about how transgression can lead to illicit doorways; "Building walls and fitting doors reinforces the psychological power of seams in experience by physical means. And if a wall is the physical manifestation of a spatial rule, then climbing over it, breaking through it, tunnelling under it... - i.e. breaching it in any way other than entering through a doorway open as a sign of permission - is a transgression of that rule"³⁹.

By knocking a hole in a fence, the transgressors transformed a "state controlled space to a contested, social space"⁴⁰.

39 (Unwin, 2007, p. 34)

40 (Amouroux, 2011, p. 16)

Unwin goes on to explain that “sometimes the most intriguing doorways are those through which we ought not to pass”⁴¹. Breaks in fences or gaps in a wall can give us the possibility of escape and creativity and unexpected discovery. Most of the time this is combined with the excitement of infiltration and rebellion to authority. As Unwin goes onto say “Illicit doorways may be a point of access for thieves intent on robbing our houses, or conduits to freedom for psychotic murders escaping from prison, but they are also the routes taken by geniuses and heroes, artists and spies, adventures and liberating armies”⁴².

Although physical border was broken down on that day, it was the beginning of an abstract boundary was created between Denmark and Christiania. This is highlighted by the sign which says *Christiania* as you enter, and *You are now entering the EU* as you leave the area (Fig. 22).

Figure 21
A group of people
braking down a hoarding
to gain access to the
military barracks



41 (Unwin, 2007, p. 94)

42 (Unwin, 2007, p.94)



Figure 22

TRANSGRESSIVE CHILDREN

As mentioned before, the initial purpose of breaking down the fence was to establish a playground, made mostly by children and made out of junk. Although the concept of junk playgrounds may seem crazy in our health and safety society, in Denmark there were as many as 100 junk playgrounds in the mid-1960's⁴³. In *Urban Wildscapes*, Mugford explains how children can transgress the possibilities of a discarded area; "Spaces that are good to play in are not always the ones designated for that role. 'Adult' and 'child' spaces are often the same, just perceived from differing perspectives"⁴⁴

We cannot escape the fact that when the children were jumping around the junk adventure playground, they were transgressing. It may be hard for us to see that children, using an empty space in the city to play,



Figure 23
 Children's junk playground
 began to appear in
 Copenhagen in the 1960's

can be considered an act of transgression. Perhaps they did not have the understanding that they were in fact breaking the rules, but that does not stop it from being so. It is possible that they knew this action was something mischievous and that pushing of the limits was part of the fun.

Like most acts of transgression, this came about through a critical response to a problem. Problem: there was nowhere where children could play freely. Solution: take over a space which is empty and turn into a playground.

43 (Villadsen, 2006)

44 (Mugford, 2011, p. 91)

CATALYSTS

On the 26th September 1971 a group of activists began to explore the barracks, workshops and halls. They wrote about their exploits and published the story, and at the same time invited people to explore the 'forbidden city'. In this 'forbidden city' their mission was to establish an 'alternative city' that could be created through a range of experiments. People who were in search of a place to live were invited to 'immigrate with bus. No. 8 – the direct route to Christiania.'

As mentioned previously, transgression is about questioning, so we must start by asking *why* Christiania came into being? There were three main catalysts:

1. In the 1960's, the military had gradually moved out of Christiania because the barracks from the 1600's, had grown old fashioned as a military base. It was left there unused and the government had no plan of what to do with these buildings and the ramparts.
2. At the end of the 60s and beginning of 70s there were housing problems in Copenhagen. There were simply not enough places to live and too many people in the city. At the same time there were large amount condemned houses and this is how the *squatters movement* began in the capital of Denmark. As one Christiania resident states: "People simply moved into these empty houses, because fuck I have no place to live and there's empty houses, it's not fair"⁴⁵. Occupied buildings began appearing all over the city (Fig. 24).
3. A space of expression and difference was in deep desire among parts of Copenhagen's residents. As the 1960's came to a close, students began to revolt and critique modern consumer culture. There was a need to create a new society that would allow freedom from the constricting rules of the state and offer a counter-point to the homogeneity of Danish culture.

In this way, the combination of the abandoned buildings, the squatter's movement and the rise of a counter-culture led to the formation of Freetown Christiania.

⁴⁵ (Christiania: 40 Years of Occupation, 2014) 0:06 - Nils Jensen (Christiania Resident)

Figure 24

The Battle of Ryegade was a nine-day street fights in mid-September 1986, in the Copenhagen. It was the most violent event in a long-standing conflict between the Copenhagen city council and the city's community of squatters. Faced with an ultimatum to leave their illegally occupied housing or face eviction, the squatters instead fortified the streets. around their building.

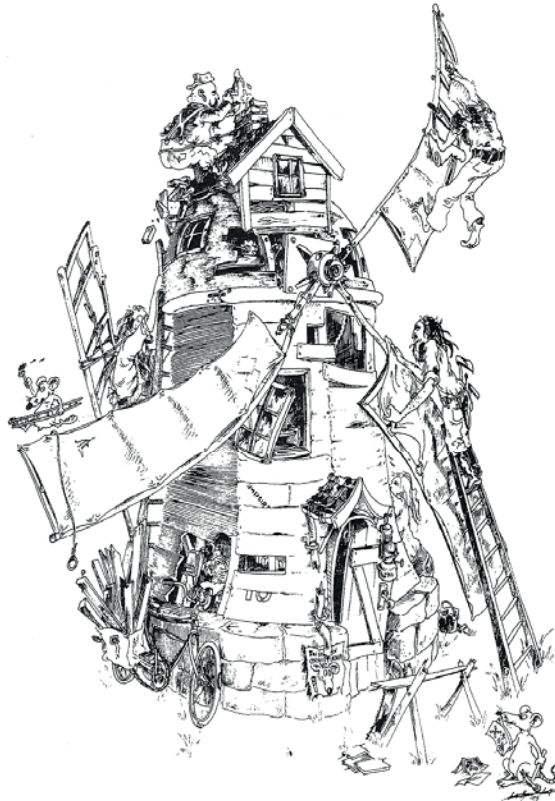


ARCHITECTURAL PLOT

Even though at times during text it has not felt as such, this is an architectural thesis. Therefore, it was imperative to focus on the architectural transgression of Christiania. This section will on three buildings which fit into the three typologies from my research: *space war barracks*, *guerrilla wagons* and *rebel architecture*. The homes in Christiania vary in form and style and are the fruit of what happens when transgression and architecture meet. This can be summed up by an encounter with a walker:

As I continued further up into the ramparts, and walking beside the Banana House (see page , I stranger was coming towards me. He had a modern Bob Dylan look about him, like if Bob Dylan was into skateboarding. Due to the way he was walking around observing, as if seeing everything for the first time, he did not seem like a Christiania resident however did seem like he had partaken in the activity Christiania is most known for. As he walked past, he saw me with my camera and said “woah this building is crazy, do people live here (the banana house)?”. I said yes and I’m doing some architecture research to which he replied, “Christiania is a wild place for architecture.”

AKTIONSGRUPPEN

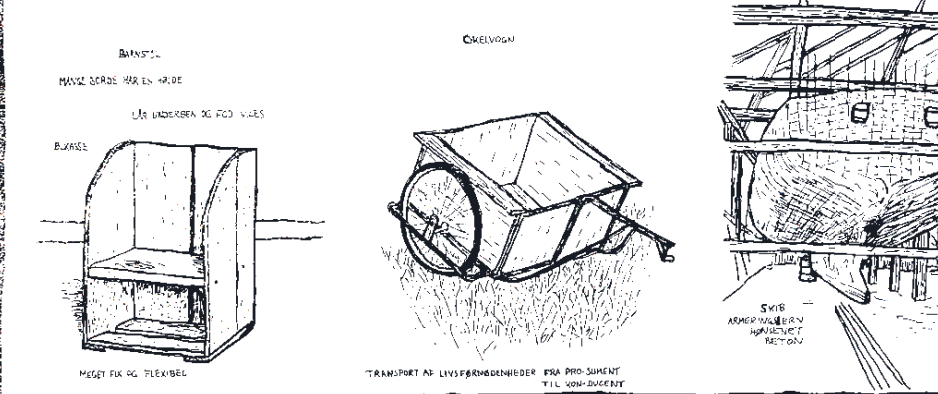


FRISTADEN CHRISTIANIA

Figure 25
Poster from the 1970's
asking people to help
with construction works



Ch r i s t



a r k i t e

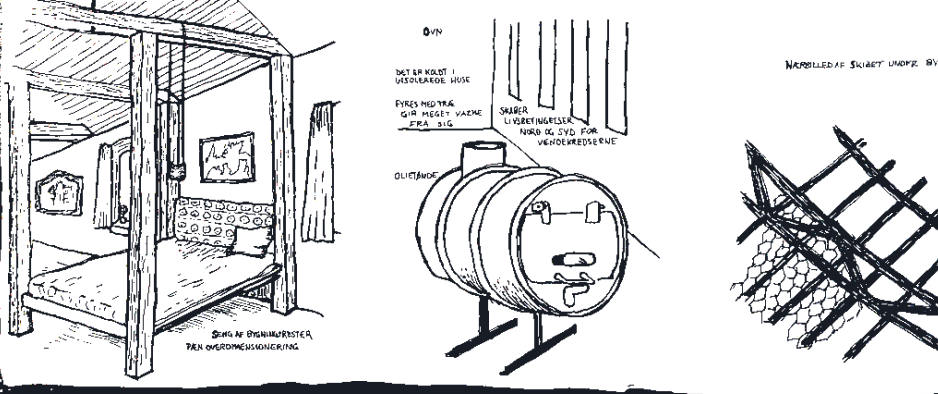




Figure 26
Poster from the 1970's
describing some of
the architecture and
design in Christiania

SPACE WAR BARRACKS

In the beginning of Christiania's history, there were a large amount of people in search of a place to live shown by the influx of hundreds of people. The politicians were caught off guard and hesitated "completely underprepared for the sudden invasion"⁴⁶. Those who came in the beginning could just look around, go into the area and pick a house to call home. During the autumn newly settled residents worked on turning the many offices quarters, soldier's barracks and stables into homes (Fig 27).

Jane Rende talks about how squatting leads to the *(un)doing* and *(over) doing* of architecture⁴⁷. When the activists transformed the barracks, they were doing architecture by undoing the spaces that they found. Their decided home improvements were probably random and might not have had any apparent reason, but with every addition of window and destruction of a door, came the possibility to make the space their own (Fig. 28 & 29). The rearrangement of large spaces could be adapted to meet their needs and the type of lifestyle they wanted. The homes were occupied by a large number of friends and strangers who in their own way set to make a lifestyle which was unconventional to the rules of habitation.

In the first year of existence, Christiania was constantly threatened by the surrounding society. Just like many other squatter buildings in Copenhagen, demands were made that the area be vacated, and the period was characterized by provisional residence permits and uncertain prospects for the future.

46 (Lauristen, 2002)

47 (Rende, 1999, p. p.138)

Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29



Kaktushus

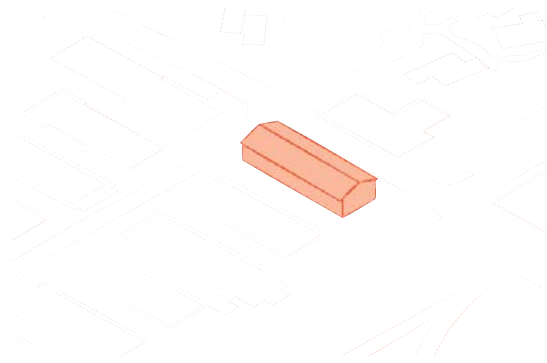
As part of my research, I wanted to find a case study which could be part of this 'space war barracks' typology. I was interested in seeing how the original structures had been developed over time and was curious to see whether transgression had been a part of this. This led me to conduct an interview and look around Stine's *Kaktushus*.

I went to see Stine who lived in a row where the buildings used to be resided by army officers. She first moved to Christiania with her parents in 1971/1972 and after 4 years in Sweden, they returned to Christiania in 1981. In 1984 she moved to *dysse* on the other side of the lake. Just two months after having her first child and the government decided demolish buildings that were classified as 'black spots', including her home. It was like a hostage situation, and Christiania had to allow the destruction of these homes or face disappearing all together.

I first walked through a gate which almost looks too overgrown to be able to open. This takes you to a very private garden, where you can then enter her workshop. You are surrounded by her own art which you can find on Instagram @stinehurtigkarl. This main room was an incredible space, with the attic having been removed so you could see the wooden structure of building as plants hang down from every corner.

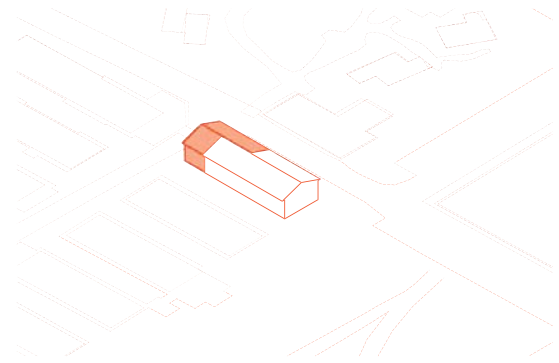
Figure 30





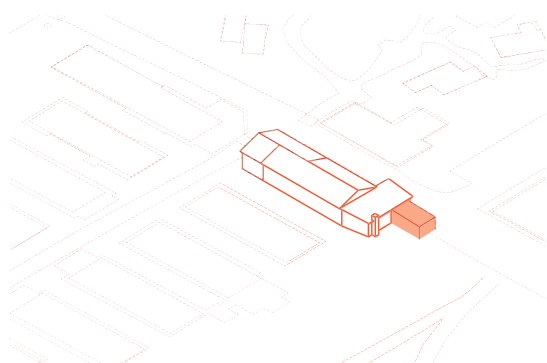
Stage 1

When this used a hippie collective in the 70's and still one house, one of the men killed himself. This is does not come as much as a shock. As Stine explained, most people who came to Christiania were from the outskirts of society and never left their problems behind when they came to live here. She tells me that same situation continues, where at least 95% of people who come here are from dysfunctional families and difficult backgrounds. This is a place you can heal and "have room to become stronger."



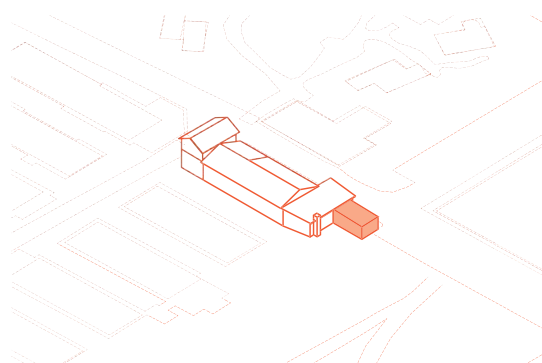
Stage 2

The house had been split oddly into two, so both sides were equal, when the hippie collective had an argument among themselves. The resident who had lived in the north side of that building had been part of the hippie collective.



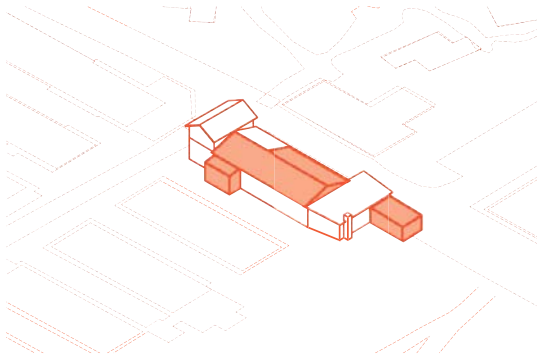
Stage 3

The previous resident had extended the building, where you sometimes find odd features in this section. There were windows inside the walls and angles which are hard to understand. In those times you could do this sort of thing, and you just had to ask permission from neighbours. The only limitations were your abilities and imagination, which there did not seem to be a lack of. Along with this there was a flower shop which consisted of poles and a roof. Here he sold cactus' along with other not so legal plants.



Stage 4

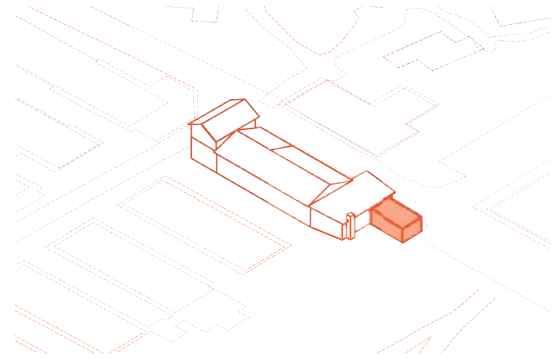
After Stine's home was destroyed and after 6 months of staying at a friend's place in Christiana, she managed to get the north end of this house. She found this section of the house completely destroyed, and empty. After some time of tracking the previous owner, Stine asked if she cleaned up the place could she stay there with the approval of the neighbours? The resident said yes but only for 6 months, this then was extended for another 6 months and then another. The previous resident never returned. Stine then set about making this part of the building liveable and added an upstairs so the three children would have their own space to sleep.



Stage 5

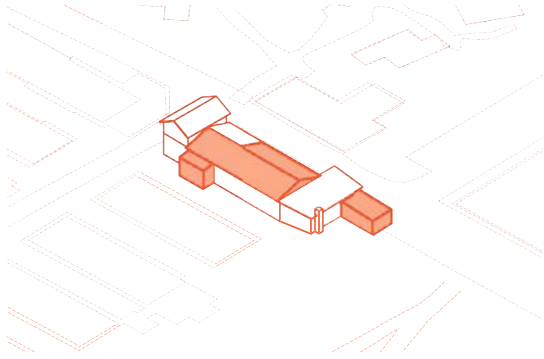
After some years, when the other side became available, she swapped with the resident who had been living there and removed the attic. When she swapped into the south side in 2008, it was not in the best state. Much of it still had remnants from when it was the commander's office and home, for example the walls were insulated with dry seaweed. So, she tore it down until its bare bones and insulated and took down the attic space. No one had been in this attic for many years, so they found among other things one female soldier's boot and a telegram which said in Danish 'congratulations on the wedding'.

Since 1992 it has become difficult to conduct any construction work. They take aerial photos to make sure no-one is extending their house. The flower shop, where they sold plants was evident in the aerial photos. So slowly Stine began to make it a slightly more permanent structure. In this way taking the transgression step by step, little by little, pushing the limit very slowly so it does not break.



Stage 6

Stine showed me a curved extension that she is building which is to become her bathroom. To build in Christiania you must obtain permission from the area you live in and then get permission from the Christiania building office. Although it took a couple months to go through these two, it took 3 years to go through the government's planning office. She was still in the process of building it and it could have looked much more elaborate as shown by some of the drawings. It is slightly harder to have experimental alterations these days because it needs approval by the government.



Stage 7

Stine planning to convert the old shabby shed into a shop for her art. I said that I could help her with the drawings if she would like. I was not expecting anything in return seeing as she was giving up her time to help me, but then she offered me an exchange of services. If I did the drawings for her new shop, I could have one of her paintings. I guess that's how things work in Christiania. I was introduced to her own weapons of mass construction as she showed me the old window she wanted to use on her new shop.

As I left, I nearly forgot my shoes, but she reminded me and said that yes this was a past hippie commune, so these says there is glass on the floor.



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 33



Figure 34

Figure 35

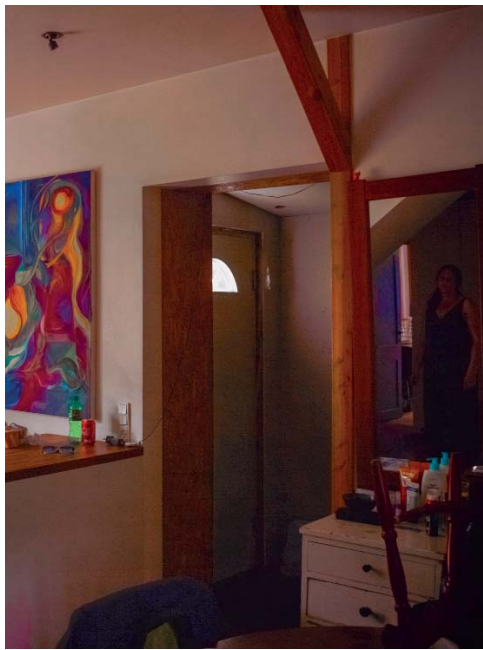


Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39



Figure 40

GUERRILLA WAGONS

Gradually as the vacant buildings were filled, a parallel housing culture started to emerge. The residents were living in a state of philosophical presentism⁴⁸ and as more and more people arrived, there was a need to create architecture which reflected this. The next step in this tale of transgression was the rolling in of the wagons. Due to the fact they were extremely cheap and easy to move they started to pop up all over the area, using sort of *guerrilla tactic*.⁴⁹ Guerrillas make the use of surprise raids and sabotage, by small, mobile groups of irregular forces operating in enemy territory.

In similar manner these objects were rolled in quickly across enemy lines into a territory which was not theirs. Not only did it signal a different type of squatting but also a different type of extrusion, as an object is placed rather than just modified as we saw with the *space war barracks*.

The uncertainty is what made it risky to invest too much time and resources into the property with fears of eviction; “Back then, we didn’t know if Christiania would survive just half a year ahead. But we knew that the more we worked and built, the more viable the sanctuary became.”⁵⁰ Therefore, the wagons were the perfect tool meaning you could simultaneously own and not own where you lived.

In 2007 Pernille Skov & Søren Holm Hvilsby mapped and document all the wagons⁵¹. At the time there were about 84 buildings which have their origins in these movable objects. They show how as time went on the wagons were altered, expanded, customised partially demolished and/or upgraded by their occupants to suit individual needs.

Although the wagons were not physically together, they were bound socially as a tactic for occupation. It is the presence of this society in conjunction with the material structure that established a unified territory of resistance.

48 (Ingram & Tallant, 2018) - Philosophical presentism is the view that neither the future nor the past exists.

49 Guerrilla warfare is the contest between opponents of unequal strength.

50 (Christianitten, 1978, p. 18) (google translation from Danish)

51 (Skov & Holm Hvilsby, 2007)

Figure 41



Figure 42



Kamufleret Vogn

As Emmerick and I walked, I was told that the man on the bicycle had an amazing home I should look at. One which has never been documented. We paced beside him, as he continued to cycle with a large 'cigarette' in his mouth. After a short discussion with Emmerick, Richard agreed to let me document his house.

The following day I crossed over the bridge to what I call the 'outskirts' of Christiania. Richard prefers to live on what he called "the poor side of Christiania" in order not have to interact too much with what occurs beyond his home. There is a feeling that the other side has become too close to the outside world. Camouflaged behind the wilderness he has managed to create the privacy he searches for.

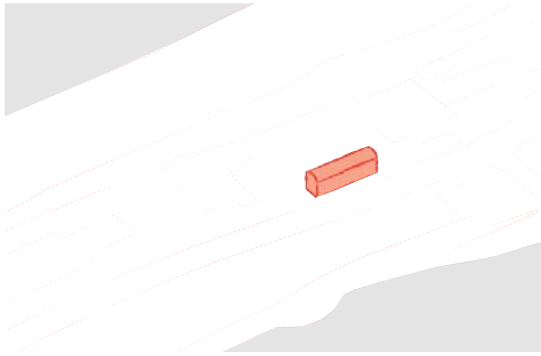
As I stood in his living space, that in many ways he had purposely left this area of the house uninhabitable so that he would have his own space. As long as it was this way, he would not be disturbed by others. I cannot really argue with that reasoning. He said it would be better not to take pictures of this part of the building, because there were too many private things. This was annoying because it was by far the most fascinating.



Figure 43

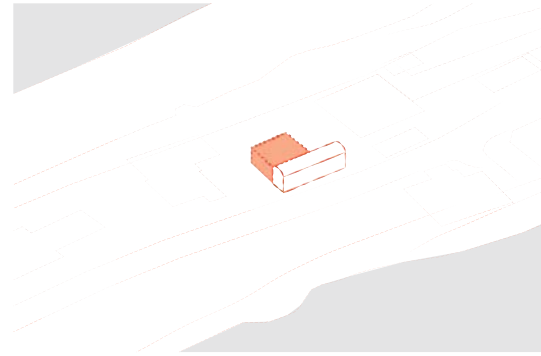


Figure 44



Stage 1 - Wagon

The story goes that Richard had never lived in a single place for more than a year. I had been told he used to be in a travelling theatre group. This is until 1997 when he ended up in Christiania, where he acquired a white wagon and set about living there. Now the wagon is barely visible, sounded by a large wooden structure. You enter the house through the wagon where there are mainly tools and materials to be used for a construction purpose.

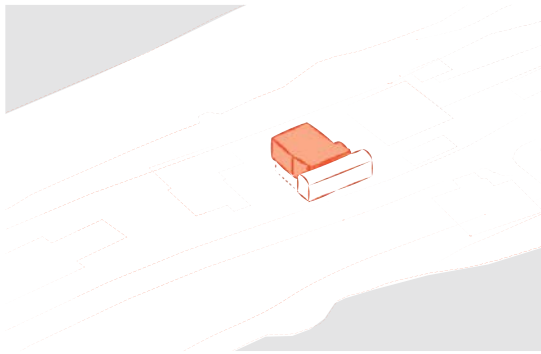


Stage 2 - Concrete

The building, which is attached to this wagon, forming one collaged shape sits on a concrete base, with four main wooden columns. This base is in fact of a basement. There are three versions of how it came to being:

- It was constructed as part of the military base
- The previous resident had built it.
- Richard started work on this as soon as he started living in the wagon

I cannot disclose the correct answer. This might have something to do with the fact that me and Richard agreed that we are very forgetful people. As he explained, it would be harder for anyone to take this away from him, compared to if he only had a wooden structure.

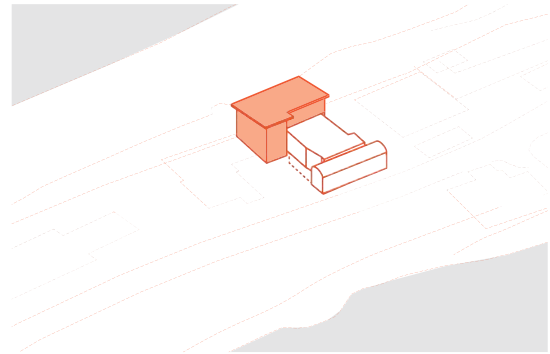


Stage 3 – Main building

From the wagon you enter a large dark room, which is slightly chaotic. In the middle of this chaos, is where I saw the resident for the first time in his natural habitat, sitting at the 'dining table' smoking while surfing the internet on his old mac screen which is mounted to the wall.

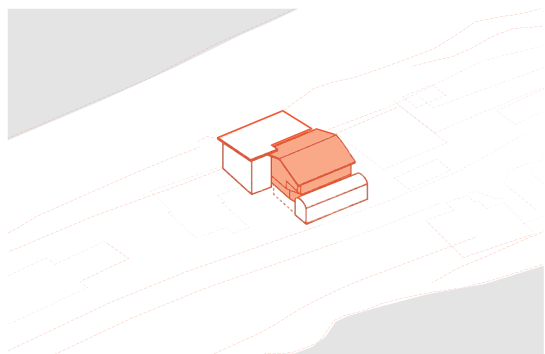
After acquiring the wagon, he continued building without any drawings. He never obtained permission I think, but then again, we both have bad memories.

Surrounded by darkness and with layers of building around him I felt that privacy, and felt grateful he let me in. I do not use the word dark as a negative. As the light filters from the windows on the outside layers there was a certain beauty to it. It reminds me of the Japanese book *In Praise of Shadows*, in which the author talks about the beauty of darkness and dirt.



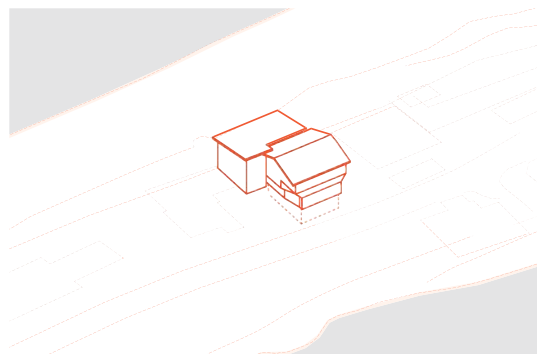
Stage 4 - Back Extension

The part of the house which he would let me take pictures was the newer areas. The back extension of the house has a different feel to it, mostly because it was not completely dark. The wooden interior added to the contrast with the warmth of the summer day lighting up the wooden cladding. I could see the wood structure even if I had difficulties understanding how it all came together. This is consistent throughout the building. It is hard to understand the complexity of the structure and spaces however you never feel lost.



Stage 6 – Extended Up

The newer part of the house sits on the previous layer which you can access by going up a ladder. It sits in stark contrast to the part I just came from. There was nothing particularly wrong with it however in comparison it did not have the same beautiful impact.



Stage 7 – Wagon Disappearance

To him the outcome is not important, and it perhaps does not exist. His fondness for the project lies in the process. At present he is renovating, which means the wagon will disappear. He already had a family and wants to leave a desirable place to live for the next inhabitants of the property. Although he has spent a large amount of his life in this house and has spent countless hours on the project, it is interesting to hear his thoughts about the future of the home. The current renovations do not have his ideas in mind but those of the following residents.

Every step in the history of these *guerrilla wagon* could be deemed as an act of transgression. The wagon has now been out done by the large structure which stands behind it.



Figure 45



Figure 46



Figure 47



Figure 48



Figure 49



Figure 50

REBEL ARCHITECTURE

If we consider these workmen wagons as the beginning of the physical intrusion, the rebel architecture was the next chapter in this tale of transgression; “In the beginning there were plenty of rooms to choose from, and incredible energies were used to transform existing laboratories, barracks, powder towers and offices into beautiful apartments... In the past few years, self-made houses in Christiania have sprung up like mushrooms”⁵²

With these ‘mushrooms’ Christiania broke the rules of the ‘commissioned project’, by continuously partaking in unsolicited interventions. For the most part, no construction drawings were ever put together, no permits were ever stamped and work began before it was understood what was being built.

As time went on and little by little, the Christianites became more established as the threat from the outside was no longer eminent. The residents dared to dream, and you can tell by some of the architecture that they dreamt big. As you walk deeper and deeper into the Freetown you see laboratory of experimental architecture. These tailored homes vary in both their forms and architectural sophistication. The new buildings range from recycled construction in the spirit of to super-experimental housing.

Both architectural principles and building codes have been pushed to the limit in Christiania. I have a feeling that not many construction code books were laying around Christiania’s building site. This challenged how architecture is produced, a challenge that architects should not only accept but learn from.

In 1989 the law meant that the rules about protected zones and buildings, area usage, the establishment of new buildings as well as the renovation and demolition did not apply to Christiania. In 1996 this was supplemented with a development plan, which gave dispensations for certain buildings while requiring that others be torn down.⁵³

⁵² (Edwards, 1980)

⁵³ (Dirckinck-Holmfeld, et al., 2004)

Figure 51
*Structure which stood in
Christiania during the
first years of existence*



Figure 52
*Building constructed with
the same ratio's as the
Pyramids. It was eventually
replaced with a similar
house which can still be
found in the same location*

6 Sans

I carried on walking along the lake looking for a building which I had come across from my previous research and had not yet visited. As I made my way deeper into Christiania, among the grass and out on the lake was a building which had the look of a spaceship that had landed on the edge of the lake. I came over to the other side and that is where I met Roben, the resident of this architecture.

Roben has been living in Christiania since 1984 and in this house the since 1990's. The building had been first designed and built by a student of architecture when Christiania first came into being and only lived in it for a year. His primary goal was to build his dream experimental home; something as a student of architecture I can relate to.

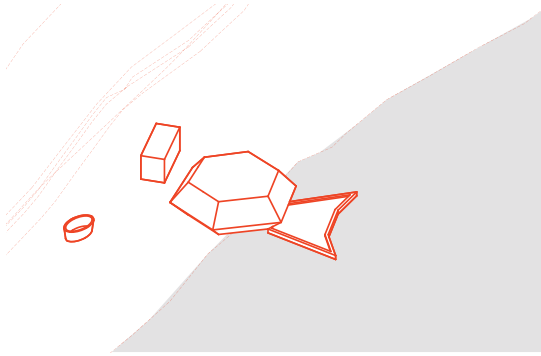
A journalist then moved in, and Roben remembers always walking past it when the area was even more overgrown and thinking how incredible it was and how much he'd like to live there. When the opportunity came, he jumped at the chance.

Since then, the work on the house has never stopped. Now retired he spent most of his years working for the building office in Christiania as a carpenter and construction architect. Most of the reconstruction building was done by himself with some help from other residents, as is the norm.

We talked about how the whole renovation of the house was made from recycled material. This sits in stark contrast to the basic and un-experimental new house made of new materials, that I could see from his terrace. The terrace has been changed many times, mostly because of the water damage to the wood. The boards we were sitting on whilst talking with a coffee in hand, came from the bridge that links the two sides of Christiania. Insulation was put in; new windows were exchanged for old ones and a new layer was fixed to the inside making part of the building double glazed.



Figure 53



The building in plan is a perfect hexagon and in section an elongated hexagon, with the corners being at a 90-degree angle. Although it is only 22sqm² the building comes out from the sides, making it feel much bigger with all the furniture/ cooking equipment fitting on the parts that protrude. Now this is significant, because in Christiania you pay a type of rent depending on sqm² used, so he only needs to pay for the floor area at the base. As you walk into his house, you get an intense whiff of heat, the trouble with living in a small hexagonal structure.



Figure 54



Figure 55



Figure 56

Looking more closely, he explained that there were 7 columns altogether, 6 angled at each corner and one in the middle. When he acquired the house in 1998 it was unlevelled and rotten. I was shown where he cut the columns and placed wedges to fix this. A small canoe sat by one of the columns, so I asked him if he ever takes it out for a paddle. The only purpose this served was, to have somewhere to stand and move things around when he renovated. It turns out that conducting construction work on water is as difficult as you might expect.



Figure 57

Figure 58



Figure 59



Figure 60



Figure 61

Figure 62

He shows me his new wooden bath, that he just purchased over-looking the lake, which looked idyllic, but I am not sure how much I would want to use it in the winter. A few years ago, he tried to build some toilet and bathroom facilities, which would have been a mini 6 sans. However as soon as started to put it up, the government told him to have it down within a week. Unfortunately, you can't even put a small rail without the government coming round and fining the residents.

Instead, he was given a small wooden bath by his son in law. It now sits there, with amazing views over the lake.

Figure 63





BODIES IN SPACE

During our daily routines, the body is accustomed to follow a set of spatial rules. Such as only cross the road when the green man appears (although I am going to suggest most of us have broken this rule). Although these rules serve a purpose, they also require our bodies to be disciplined, regulated, and ultimately controlled.

In the book *The Design of Protest*, Tali Hatuka explains that “... during protests, the individual’s disciplined body adjusts to different rules beyond the agreed-upon norms of his or her self-will and needs.”⁵⁴ In these instances the rules of the game change. The acceptance of these different rules is fundamental to the act of protest. The atmosphere, qualities and spatial interpretation of a city completely change. I believe that no architect, urban planner designer or artist can have as much effect on a space that of a large crowd protesting. Therefore, instead of thinking of spaces as places in which bodily acts take place, we can examine bodily acts themselves as producing space.

Every time Christiania’s existence is endangered, people from all over Copenhagen take to the streets. I would like to go through one instance where this happened. In 1975 the authorities declare that Christiania must be vacated by the 1st April the following year. The Christianites must be creative to stop this from happening. They begin an information and propaganda campaign all over the country to create a big ‘party’.

Towards the end of March 1976, thousands of people arrive to join the Christiania Army. As to avoid chaos, the Christiania’s organise all logistical activities into the so-called ‘rainbow army’, where each ‘soldier’ is dressed in one rainbow colour and carries out a specific task. For example, they had Red Activators, Blue Calmers, Purple Cleaners, and White Samaritans.

As the day gets closer you can feel the increasing nervousness and excitement in the air. People sleep in units at night to prepare for an unexpected ‘attack’. A few days before *Armageddon*, the government calls off the attack; they simply do not know what to do. The enormous number of bodies makes it impossible to clear Christiania.

54 (Hatuka, 2018, p. 105)

Figure 64
Poster used to organise
the Rainbow Army



Figure 65
Rådhuspladsen The main
square in Copenhagen,
after the Rainbow army
won the battle



Although the bodies which use Christiania regularly have an importance in making its presence stable, when that stability is threatened, bodies act in a different manner. Christiania therefore grows from its boundary as activity spills out from the *informal city* and permeates into the *formal city*. By creating spatial instability in the *formal city* there is an attempt to stabilise the *informal city*.

As I sit here and drink coffee in the 'town' I look around to figure out what type of people that come to Christiania. After some time, I figure out that I could not stereotype. There are some people looking like they came from the office for a lunch break to partake in the illicit activity the area is most known for. Danish high school students wearing their 'having just graduated' hats. Spaniards who I gathered were just in Copenhagen to study. It feels like a space which is not just for a select few but for anyone looking to break away from the homogeneity of the *formal city*.

Figure 66
School children on a
tour of Christiania





Figure 67

These days, by making the space in Christiania malleable, it allows people within the city to think of Christiania as also theirs.

One night whilst on pusher street ... I started talking to a Copenhagen resident about different drug policies in Europe. As we talked, he told me that he had lived in Christiania for a whilst a friend was away for a few months and needed someone to look after his place. He also seemed to be quite friendly with some of the pushers. There have been constant disputes between the pushers and residents, which seems mostly stem from the different ideologies. With a foot in both camps, he he would just love it if the residents of Christiania and *the pushers* would stop their quarrelling and work together for a united vision of what Christiania could be. It seems that they somehow live worlds apart, one side 'lawbreakers' and the other ex-hippies, whilst physically existing so close together.

BEAUTY IN TRANSGRESSION

As shown by the map I decided to divide Christiania based on my understanding in order to give an insight into the 'feel' of each area.

I came on a study trip to Copenhagen during the second year of my bachelors and at that time I had never heard of Christiania. I only happened to go there because a friend of a fellow student took us there one night. Looking back, I find it odd that we were never shown Christiania as part of an architectural study trip. I feel like walking around and looking at the unique architecture in Christiania might have been beneficial. Of course, even though one could say that the buildings do not adhere to the normal 'principles' of architecture, perhaps it is time to question the principles surrounding the subject of architecture.

In order to question these notions, I am providing a section of images and stories of what comes into fruition when transgression and architecture is merged. The buildings in Christiania may not adhere to the architectural principles of beauty that are suggested to us in our architectural education, however if you look carefully one can, both physically and metaphysically, spot the beautiful moments of transgression.




Figure 68
Map of Freetown
Christiania with self-
labelled sections





Peter Is A Good Person

During a symposium called *The Politics of Architecture* I went to a talk by architect Santiago Cirugeda of *Recetas Urbanas*. During the talk he said something about his social projects that can also be attributed to his type of transgressive architecture. When someone tells him his social architecture was beautiful because of the process but it in the end was ugly, he replies by saying:

“The process was amazing. Yes, it is beautiful the process with the people, with the neighbourhood but in the end it is ugly. And I always say, all of you have an ugly friend, it’s Peter. Peter is ugly you know. The Mother knows too, but Peter is happy, invites you to have beer, is a good dancer but he is ugly you know. It is very clear, sometimes the architecture can be ugly, but it is a good person. Peter is a good person and sometimes architecture is just ugly, but it is a good person. Peter is a good person. Sometimes architecture is just pornography. It could be amazing, the picture amazing, wow, with blonde girls, beautiful man but it is boring. (My architecture) is ugly but it is beautiful inside.”⁵⁵

Therefore, when I talk about the ‘beauty of these buildings and spaces, at times they might not adhere to normative architectural principles of beauty, however what they stand for is a thing of beauty.

55 (Cirugeda, 2019)

Figure 69
Receitas Urbanas - Spiders are projects which brings together the prosthesis of buildings and the occupation of empty lots



THE TOWN

Figure 70



Figure 71

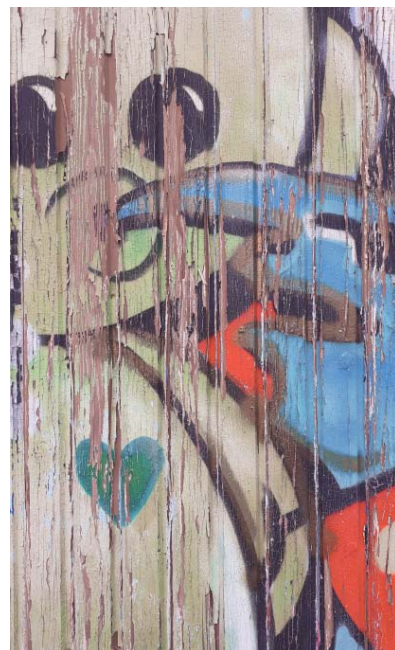


Figure 72



Figure 73



Figure 74





As you come in the main entrance of Christiania you are presented with a different kind of city. Although it has a different atmosphere, it does not feel too distant from the city I had just come from. The bars, cafes and shops were opening with pusher street beginning to have a large presence. This area felt like middle ground between the city and the village where I would be staying. It felt like the no-man's land between the trenches.

Figure 75

Figure 76



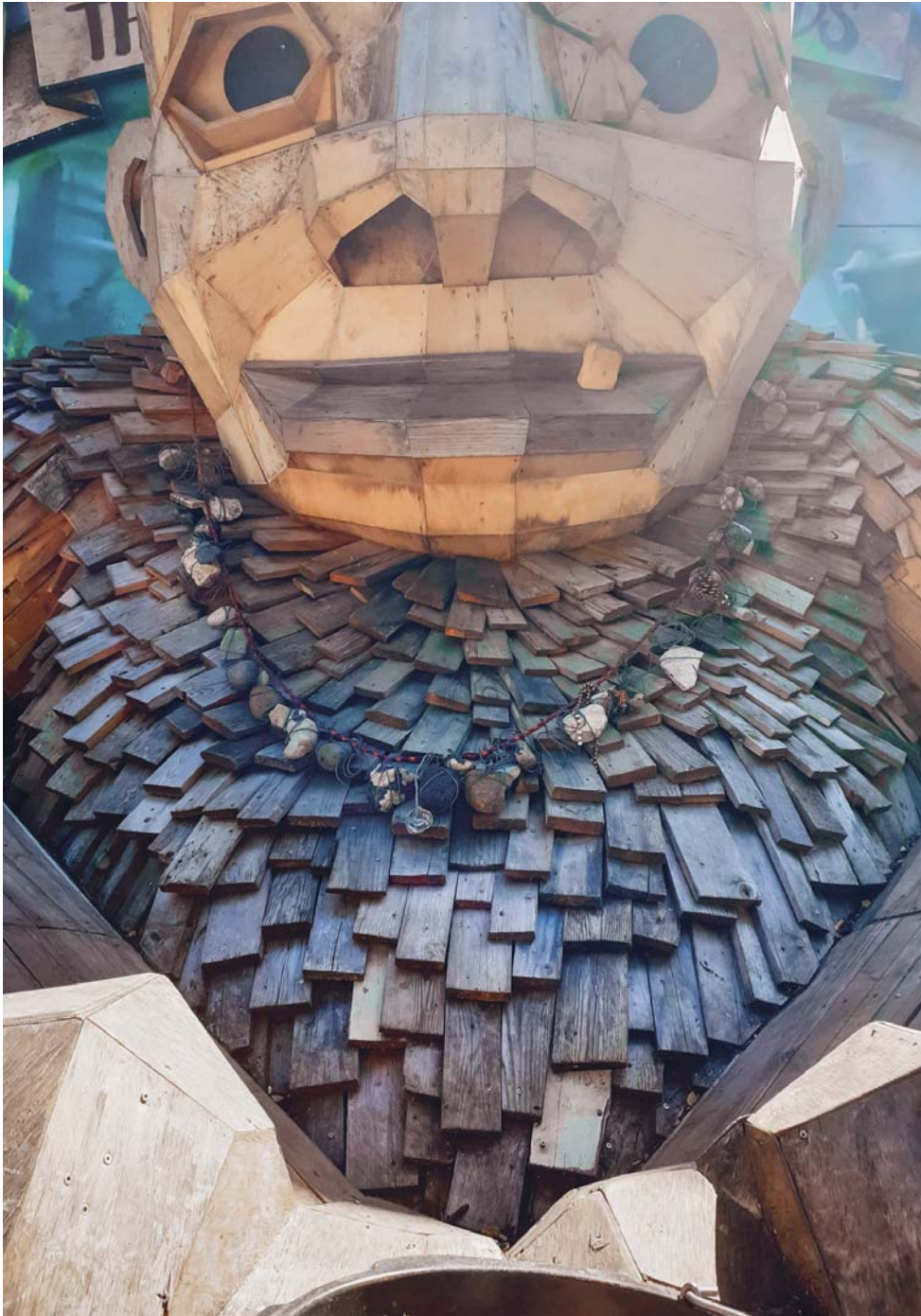


Figure 77

Figure 78



Figure 79

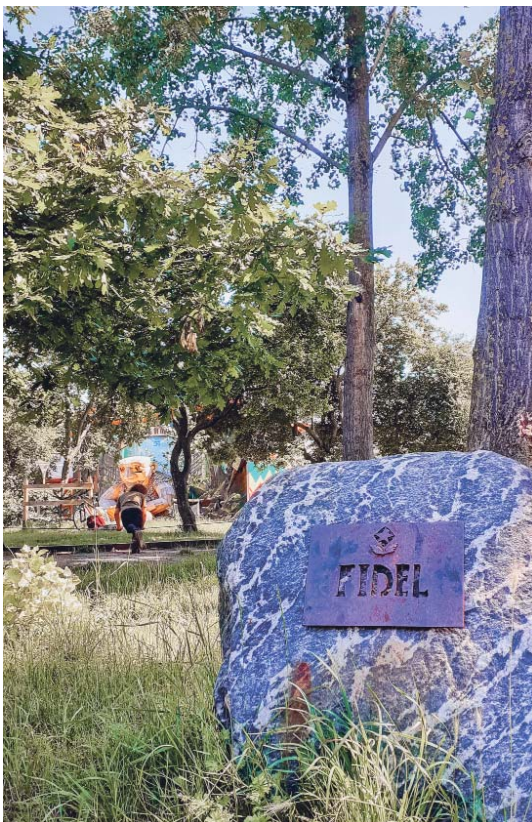


Figure 80



In front of this building is a small park where people are enjoying the beautiful summer day. Emmerick and I stop by a rock with the words Fidel placed on it. This monument to Fidel Castro, was given by the Cuban embassy along with a tree which now stood tall. This tree and sculpture now have a friend. There is a more recent sign which says the name of Chavés, which was requested by the Venezuelan government. As Emmerick stated these 'are political statements.'

Figure 81



Figure 82

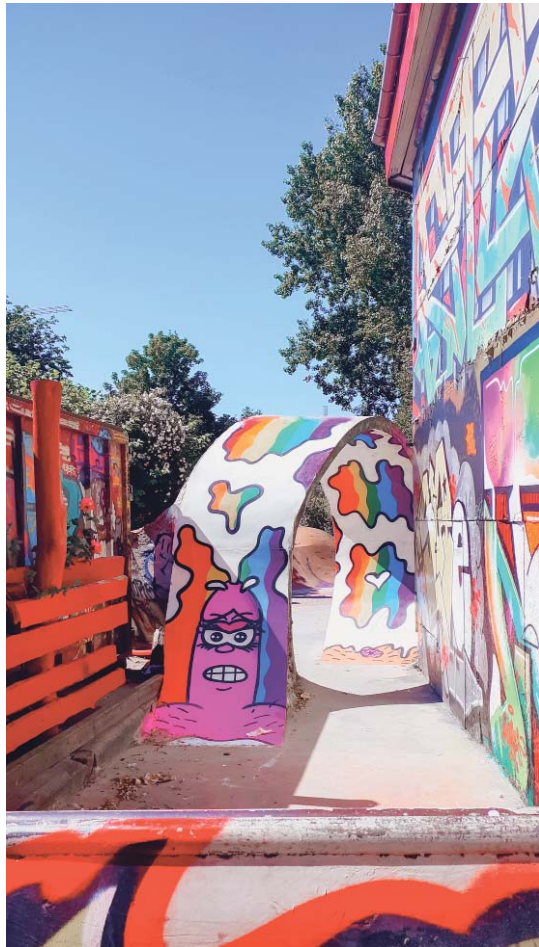


Figure 83

Figure 84



Figure 85

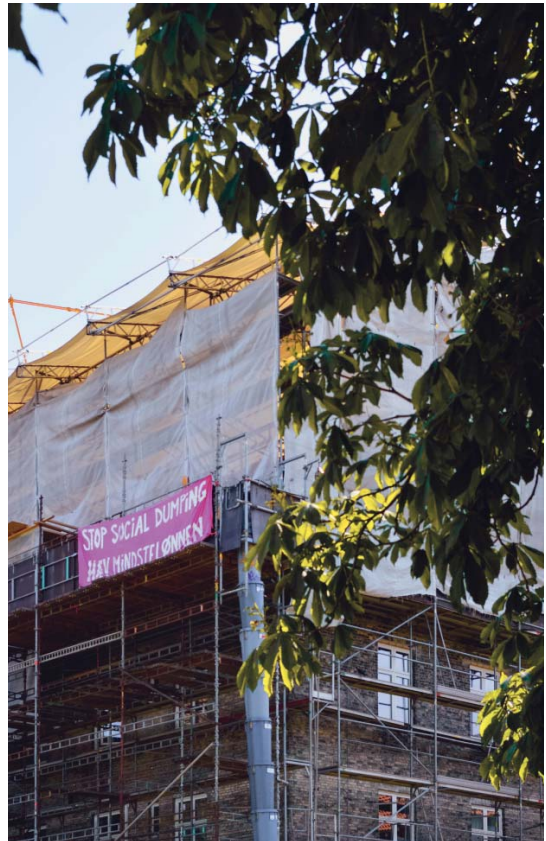


Figure 86



Figure 87



Figure 88



Figure 89



Figure 90



Figure 91



Figure 92



Figure 93



Figure 94



Figure 95



Figure 96



Figure 97



THE VILLAGE

Figure 98



Figure 99



Figure 100



Figure 101



Figure 102



Figure 103



Figure 104





Figure 105

As I navigated through small courtyards in the vicinity of where I was staying, I came across a resident who was cleaning the weeds from the base of his plant. I asked some of the regular questions of how long he had been here and if he built the house. He began to tell me about some of the features of the house such as the chimney which was built by this association of craftsmen. This is when I discovered about the *Navers*⁵⁶ who are a group of construction workers who travel around working on building sites. They have participated in a substantial amount of construction work in Christiania including the *Dyssenbroen* (bridge that connects both sides of Christiania) and the *Banana House*.

⁵⁶ They are called 'Navers' in Danish, 'Journeymen' in English and 'Gesellenwanderung' in German.

As I was walking back to my 'hut' for lunch, my neighbour in the *Banana House* cycled past on her Christiania bike. I took the opportunity to ask her if I could at some point come and look inside. She said of course and led me up the stairs and into the house. Funnily enough it was also the shape of a banana inside, well not exactly a banana, but it sounds more fun if I say so. The large main living space curves round with a bedroom and kitchen at either end. The living space feels like it can fit 12 people but only one person currently lives here. There is a reason for this.



Figure 106



Figure 107

Figure 108



Figure 109



Figure 110



Figure 111



Figure 112



Going up a small ladder, there is a very basic sleeping area with about 6 small beds. These beds were for the *Navars* that I had learnt about a few days ago. The group helped design and build this house, so whenever one or a group comes to Christiania, they have a place to stay and then potentially work. You are also only allowed to live in the house for a total of three months, probably to not allow anyone to think of it as theirs but as part of Christiania's *Navar* community. When I wrote this there were none staying in the *Banana House*.

One evening as the sun was setting over the Copenhagen I decided to go for a walk and continue taking pictures. As I was living next door to the *Banana House* I decided to start there. Walking up the steps you are presented with a sign which warns you that people live here, so take some care. As I turned the corner of the house, a young man was walking out and instantly I recognised not who he was but what he was a part of. A *Navar* now stood in front of me. To be more precise he is a *Gesellenwanderung*, the German equivalent of the Scandinavian version. As he explained, the premise is, you train in a certain building trade or craft, and then join this association. You then travel around practicing this trade.

Jan, the *Gesellenwanderung* carpenter had just arrived in Christiania. I had been talking to a few people around Christiania about these *Journeyman* as they are known in English, it was a surprise to see one in front of me, wearing the traditional garments that they are required to wear in public. In his pockets he had a map of Copenhagen, his tobacco, a lighter and his wallet. He was travelling with little else as is the tradition.

Figure 113



I decided to give him a little tour of the interesting architectural buildings in Christiania. As we walked along the embankment, I explained some of the history and some of the complicated issues surrounding the area. We came across the Pagoden House, knocked on the door and asked the resident if we could come in to have a look at some of the architecture and carpentry in the building. The resident seemed a little hesitant but I think it helped having Jan there as his purpose in Christiania was automatically understood, and I feel the *Christianites* have a certain affection to these craftsmen.

Figure 114



Figure 116



Figure 115





Figure 117

Figure 118



Figure 119



As you turn the corner of the house you are presented with a room which shows us how the inside the curved roof's wooden structure works. He then came out with a little model to help us understand it. It turned out he was an architect who had designed the building and has been living there ever since.

As we walked through the different parts, there were discussions about architecture and carpentry. The outfit has not changed a lot since the formation of the association back in the medieval ages, but somehow as we were walking around Christiania, he did not look that much out of place and people didn't take much notice of him. I told him that if there was a place where he wouldn't stand out it would be Christiania.



Figure 120

Figure 121



Figure 122



Figure 123

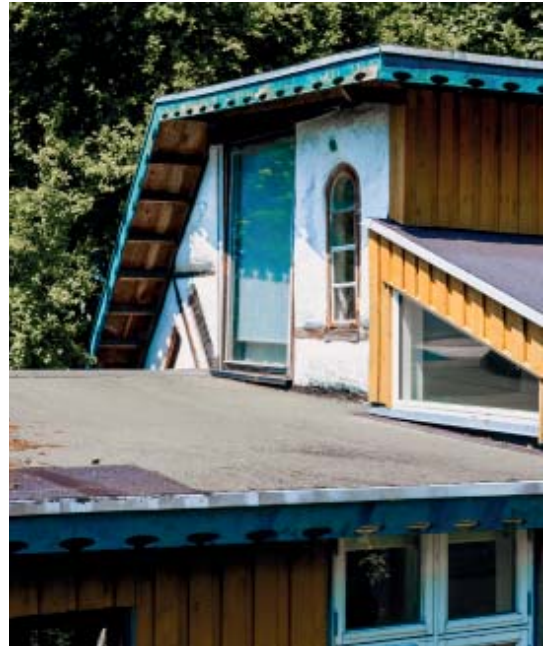


Figure 124
Weapons of mass destructions



Figure 125



Figure 126

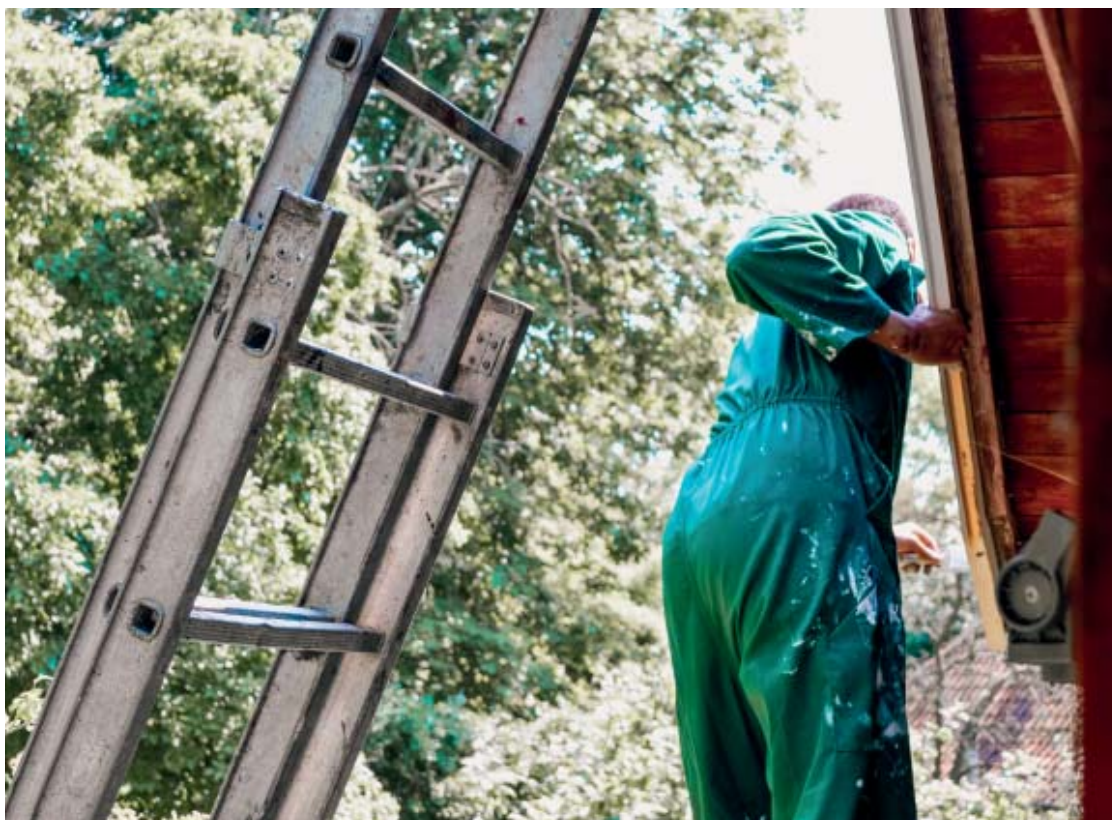


Figure 127



Figure 128





Figure 129



Figure 130



Figure 131

Figure 132



Figure 133



THE OUTSKIRTS

Figure 134



Figure 135





Figure 136

Figure 137



Figure 138



Figure 139



Figure 140

Figure 141





Figure 142



Figure 143

Figure 144



Figure 145



Figure 146



Figure 147



THE SUBURBS

Figure 148
*Continuous work is conducted
renovating historical
buildings on site*



Figure 149





Figure 150



Figure 151



Figure 152



Figure 153

Figure 154



Figure 156



Figure 155



Figure 157



Figure 158



Figure 159





Figure 160

One afternoon I took my camera to the 'other side' of Christiania. As I walked down the path and Copenhageners rode past on their bicycles, I took notice of some of the architectural qualities that this area had. Walking past a larger yellow house, I decided to see if anyone was at home. I was met with the friendliness of the resident, who lived in this house with her husband and child.

The first thing I noticed was the wooden staircase in the centre of the house. I thought about some houses I had helped design in the past. Sometimes the staircase is almost forgotten about until the end of the design, but here it takes centre stage.

The previous resident had built this home with his wife, while they lived in a wagon which no longer exists. She explains to me all the little quirks of the house such as angled walls and odd spaces. He had been a technician, who really enjoyed inventing little features, including a small door and tunnel under the house which his cat used to come in and out as he pleased.

Figure 161

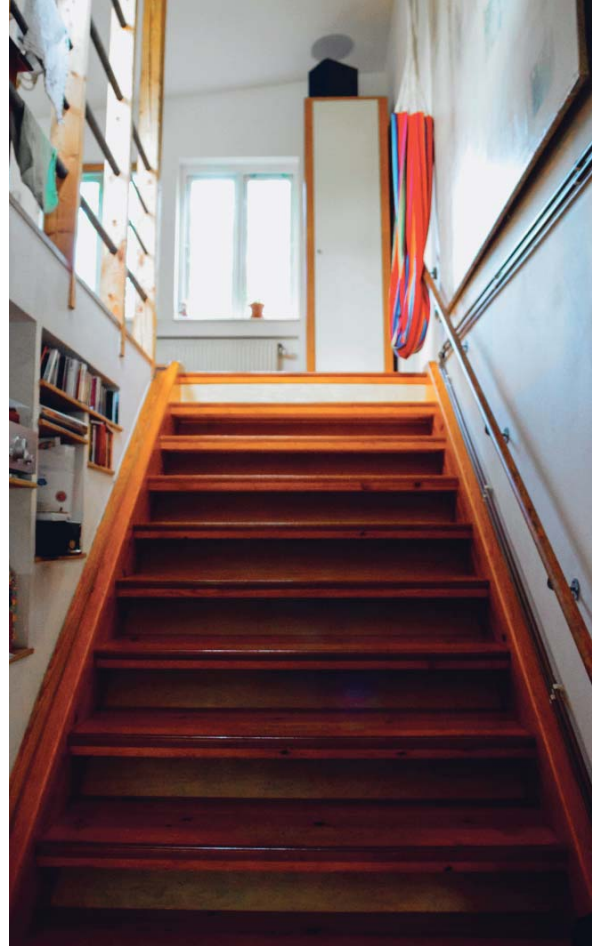


Figure 162



Figure 163

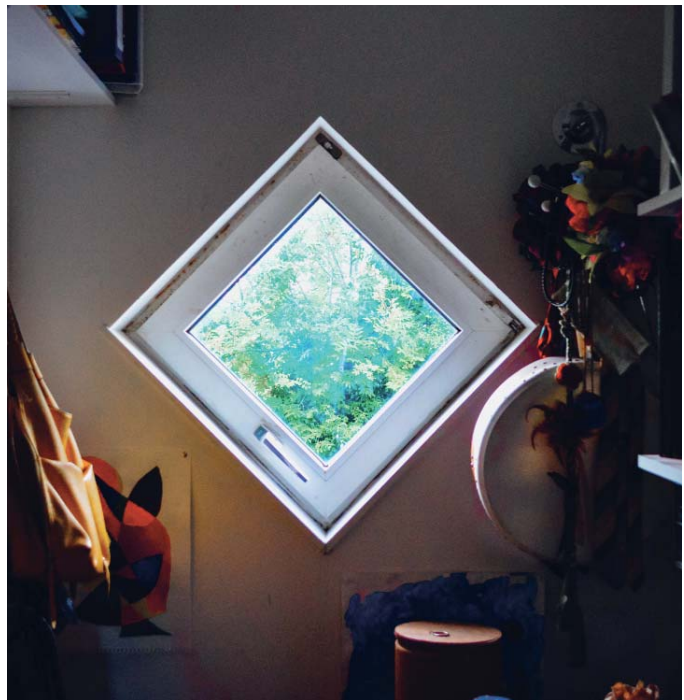


Figure 164



Figure 165



Figure 166



THE WILD

Figure 167





Figure 168



Figure 169

Figure 171



Figure 170



Figure 172



Figure 173

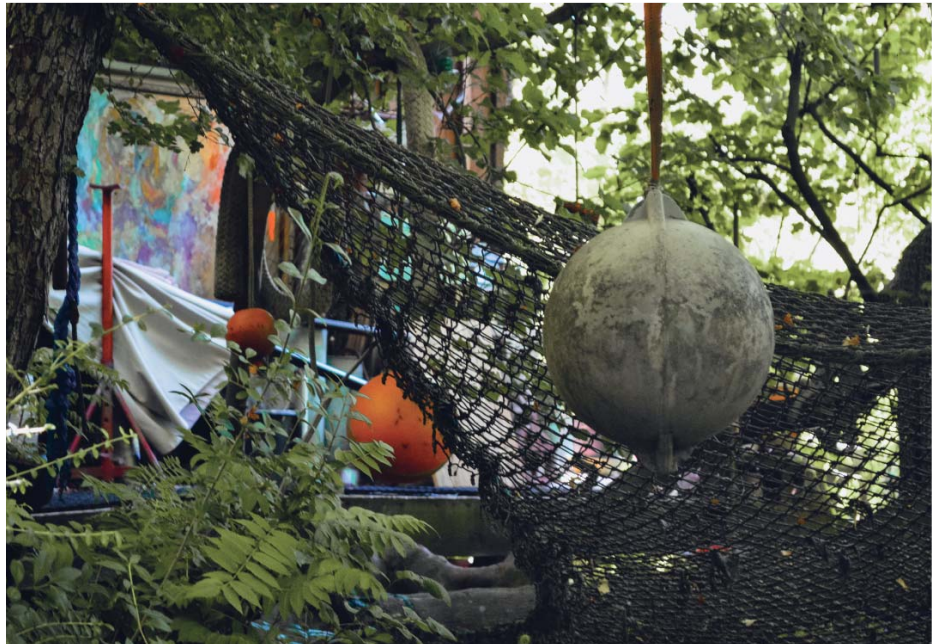


Figure 174

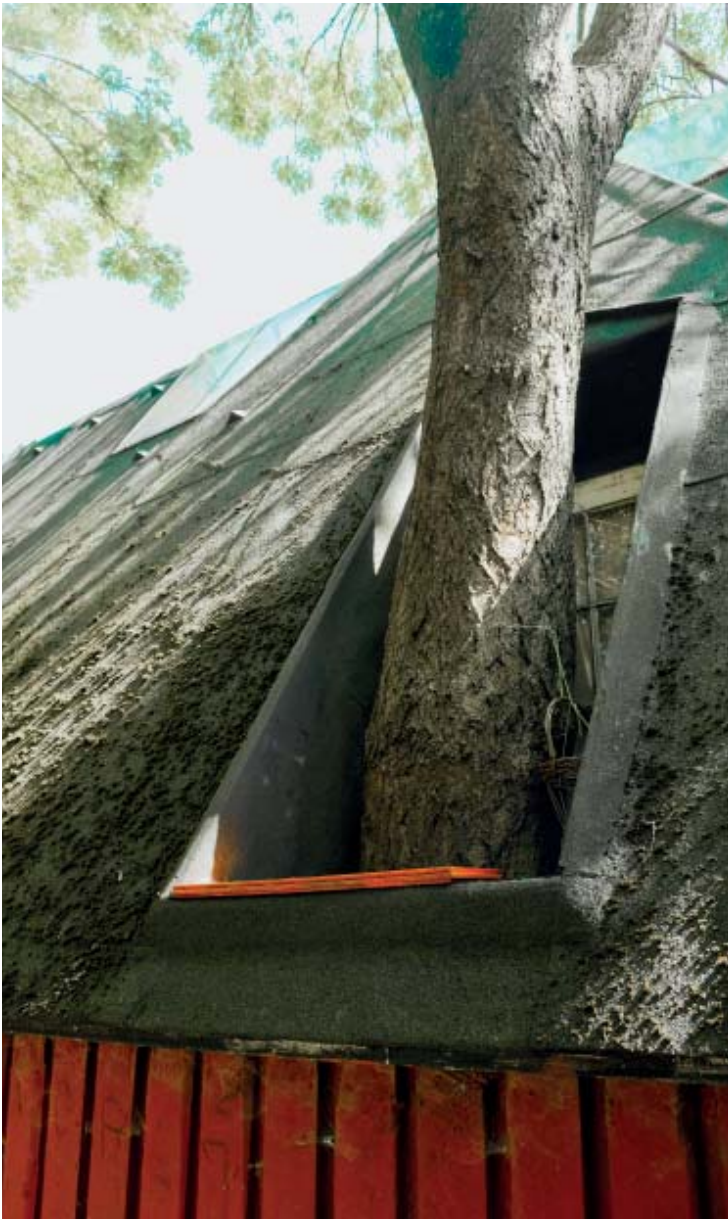


Figure 175

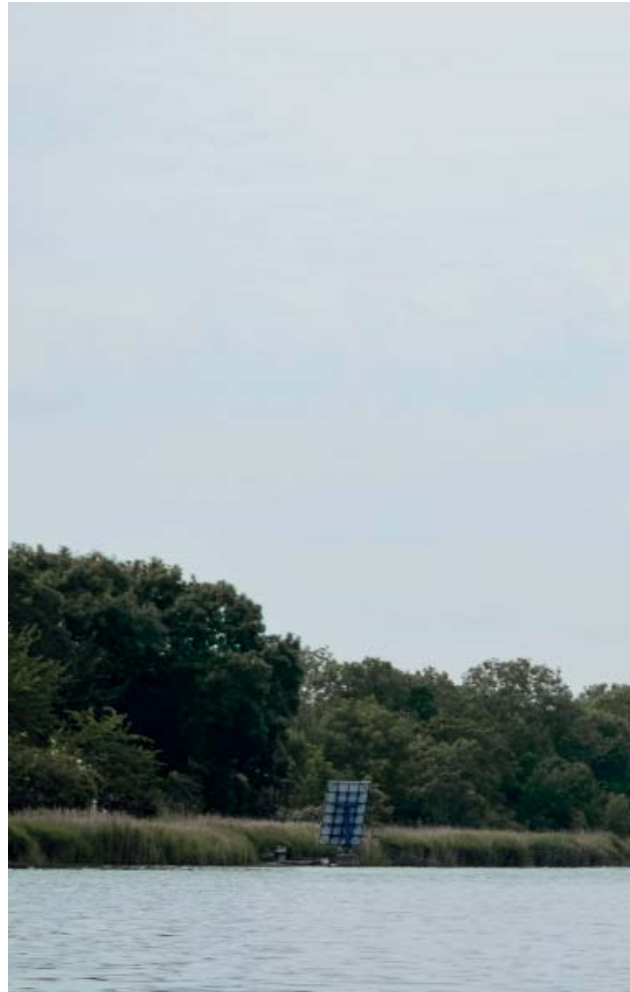


Figure 176



Figure 177





Figure 178



Figure 179

Figure 180



On the way back to my 'wagon' I walked past a floating house which I had seen a few times and had not yet documented. As I took pictures, the resident came out and said it was perfectly ok to take pictures. I told her what I was doing in Christiania and she became excited and invited me to look inside. The resident, Lisa told me that this is the only floating house in Christiania, and this was one of the reasons it still existed along with the fact of how special it looked. Her and her husband, who is no longer with us, started building the house 35 years ago.

She took me on a little tour of the house, mostly because the house itself was little. Here and there you see features such as the stairs (more like a ladder) and a little table that folds out next to the bed, and a sunroom which was boiling at this time of year. However, these features are not the end of the story, as the building would soon be disappearing.

Figure 181





Figure 182

The 35 years of having the building on the water has taken its toll and therefore a new building is being designed to be put in its place. Enthusiastically she shows me a model she has been making of how her new home will look. Just like many other residents in Christiania their houses are more than homes. They become a hobby that is never finished and always developing.

One of the features takes inspiration from her current living situation. Currently the bathroom/toilet facilities are separate from the house, but due to the agreement with the government she is not allowed to keep these. Instead, the new toilet facilities will have to be incorporated into the house. She still wants to walk outside to access them, meaning the entrance will be from the exterior. This might seem counter intuitive to our current social norms, but it makes sense if you think about conditions in a small house such as this. It is sometimes seems odd to just have the toilet right next to the living room or kitchen like you have in many smaller conventional houses, when you can always see someone coming out, not to mention the smell.

Just as in the current, she still wants to transgress. Firstly, she saw this beautiful green metal on TV and wants to use it as cladding, which the other residents in the area are not completely in favour. This is because they feel, it does not fit in with the wooden cladding of the surrounding buildings. Another idea is to have scaffolding around it to allow a place to walk whilst sheltered from the elements that come from above. Eventually this scaffolding would be covered in plants which personally I think would look incredible. Once again, the residents say the building would look unfinished, which is weird because it feels like every building in Christiania is always in a state of development and therefore unfinished. It would also be a good way of not only transgressing the rules put in place by the state (the new building must be the same size and as the existing: the scaffolding would technically make it bigger), but the 'rules' of Christiania itself.

Figure 184



Figure 183



Figure 185



Figure 186



Figure 187



Figure 188



Figure 189





Figure 190



Figure 191



Figure 192

DESTROYING TRANSGRESSION

Figure 195
Map of Christiania with
previously destroyed &
to be destroyed homes

In 2004 the government came to an agreement with Christiania that houses would be taken down, over a period of 30 years. At first, they wanted to destroy every house along the lake, however negotiations ensued, and this never came to be. This process has already started with seven houses having already disappeared and by 2022, more will have to be destroyed.

On the first evening I had gone past a group of what I presumed were residents. I have now discovered that you could classify the people at this meeting 'the resistance army'. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss options to prevent the destruction of seven homes in Christiania

I was able to obtain some notes from the meeting I had walked past on the first day⁵⁷. As stated at the top of this document this is "not a summary but an attempt to capture the ideas to fight".

Figure 193
Poster telling people
to meet in order to
discuss the future of the
homes being destroyed



Figure 194

⁵⁷ These notes were google translated from Danish to English so some of the meaning may have been lost in translation



- △ PREVIOUSLY DESTROYED
- TO BE DESTROYED

Christiania is challenged by an old deal that no longer holds.

Standpoints

We want to build more homes in CA - not tear down, but it must be where we do not strain the free nature.

- We want to build multi-rooms - not sewers
- We want heat pumps instead of unhealthy stoves (One resident is not included at this point)
- We want diversity - both for people and animals and nature
- People should not suffocate nature - come and see how we do here
- Our scattered small homes protect both the violence area and the animals from forest pigs and landfills.

Ideas

- Coffee for Christianitter so we can mobilize to fight.
- Monthly report - with update
- CA Committee is invited here (one from each party) for discussion.
- We need to make a manifesto, attitude text and a guide to where we want to go: Emmerik
- Make a book about how you live: Make suggestions to promise to make it even better. Ask scientists and well-known artists to write 2-3 lines and sign it. It must be well known scientists and charming
- We can use our own housing procedures for the new homes.
- The areas where housing should be located - may see it in a different way when it can save something in the Blue Caramel / Forest.

- The most important thing is that we get the Christianites together in the fight - and enlightened
- City walk for Christianitter in the Forest. It is important that someone on the trips knows the appointments.
- We are the wild part of the old fortress ring, Fra Kastellet over Østre plant, Botanical Garden, HCØrstedsparken etc... I would like to extract texts from christianias-frie-natur.dk that may be relevant to our fight.
- The areas ku be cultural heritage sites such as CA cultural heritage. We are probably close to the " modern Danish heritage"
- Find another angle and gold grain from there: If those living in BK and BJ had not chosen to live here there would be no cultural heritage. Then it would have been ravaged - such as Sømindedepotet. This has which has removed the violence.
- Let's sell the narrative: that we want to build more housing m but we also need replacement housing, so it's both / and, not either / or. We have yellow fields where we can build. But we should not build to dismantle other houses, but to grow more. We still have 2 houses in the "bank" where we can build on the violence facility, however, in agreement with the state.
- Local Politician n e seem more CA is local conservation worthy as heritage than the state. They have made a municipal plan for the violence area and see it as a basis for how to build elsewhere in Copenhagen.
- We are going to do a seminar for this brainstorm in September. Let's make a project description of young scientists.



Figure 196

Later in the week I went for a walk with Sarah who lives in the area known as the *Blå Karamel*. She has been living in Christiania since 2003 in order to live a different way of life. You could say that in this area they live at one with the nature and the closest I have seen to the 'hippie' community this once was.

These days eco-homes or sustainable architecture are in fashion. We have only now caught up with what many residents of Christiania have been doing for 50 years. In this way she is right when she points out they are the most modern ones of us all. Yes, these areas were the last in Christiania to receive electricity and they do not have any street lighting; however this is how they want it. With electricity comes the possibility of staying at home and watching television which brings less social interaction. The people who live here do so for a reason, they want to live in a place in the city where nature precedent.

As we walk through the greenery, she remains baffled as to why the government want to take down these homes. From what I can understand it has nothing to do with any structural, social or financial reasoning. Some which were torn down were because they were in a place which was blocking views along the lake.

Part of this plan is to also cut down all the forest, leaving only the historical trees. By covering it with grass it will take the area back to how it looked when Sweden was trying to invade Denmark.

Currently, even if you want to put down a flowerpot, the military ramparts are too precious to be altered in any further way. With all of this said, she would not want to see any more houses, because the balance between nature and people is perfect. She says this should be an area where people are allowed to dream, and once and while encounter an odd looking house.

In the section of Christiania, the people want to have responsibility for what they produce, nothing here goes to waste. Everything stays in the area by using the concept of zero waste. She says it is “a way of life” that residents have chosen to have. Her daughter was born here, and the children love these houses because of the cosiness.

Most use exterior communal toilets which can tough when the wind blows through these huts. Up-to three houses share a ‘rodzone’ (rootzone) consisting of grass which turns natural waste, such as those which come from the toilet, and purifies it before it enters back into the ecosystem. The system has been tested and proven to work not just in Christiania but in other places across the world. In ‘the wild’ biodegradable toilets in one’s own home have only become common in the last 10 years.

I do not want to paint you a pretty picture. There is a running joke in the Freetown “the further down you go to live in Christiania, the crazier you are”. The people who live here need be dedicated and be aware of what they are coming into.



Figure 197

One of the reasons that the state present for demolishing these houses is to do with historical reasons. They want to restore the ramparts to how they were pre-Freetown Christiania. I do not particularly get the sense that anyone in Denmark really cares. Plus, it can be argued that the most significant historical thing to happen in this area is Christiania itself. Another apparent reason for the destruction, is that the homes along the lake 'block the view'. This is confusing to me and probably anyone else who has ever walked along the beaten tracks of Christiania. What there is not a lack of is spectacular views with interrupted stretches where you can almost dip your foot into the water.

In terms of the houses in the *Blå Karamel*, I think that the powers that be should incentivise this type of living and architecture. I am not saying this type of lifestyle is for me or for you, however policies should be put in place to make it as easy as possible for people to live this way. As she said, talking about the perception from the outside world "before we were just crazy but now, we are cool and crazy".

Figure 198



Reflections of Field Research

As I had expected, the people on site were equally accustomed to as they were tired with having outsiders looking around. This is something I completely understand, so I had to be patient and keep trying until I found residents which were happy to talk and let me take pictures of the interior of their homes. It was only after a few days, when enough people had become familiar with my face that I decided to become more inquisitive. On the second day there I had a conversation with Emmerick about the possibility of people thinking I might be from the government:

He told me that there are the new forms of police in town: the 'soft-hats', who walk around being friendly and saying how lovely people's dogs are. I could sense a certain amount of doubt about the intentions of this new breed of officer. Along with these you also get the usual hard-hats who come in riot gear, patrolling. Probably not as friendly, and probably the same police officers just exchanging their caps for helmets. There is an altercation with these at least once a year. Then there is the most dangerous breed, the investigative police, who come disguised in normal clothes to monitor the area. I realised that maybe I could have been perceived as one of them, so I decided I would not wear my cap and try and be as open as possible. Emerick said people would not mind me taking pictures as long as I told them where I am staying and what I'm doing here.

For northern European standards, Christiania manages to be an area of tension and contested space. This is especially true around the area around *pusher street* due to the semi-illicit/illicit selling hash and marijuana. In this area it is not permitted to take pictures and I also refrained from taking any notes or asking too many questions in this part of the Freetown. I also decided to not bring my digital camera into this section of Christiania as to not arouse suspicion, and therefore used the camera on my phone and pretended to be a tourist.

Its location in the city and opposing history add to this tension, which was illustrated by an interaction I had with a resident on the last day:

As I took pictures of some old barrack buildings which were now people's homes, I had my final contact with a resident. He slightly aggressively asked what I was doing and I explained I was conducting research to which he replied that me "taking pictures like that was kind of creepy".

Walking away, the final words I heard in Christiania came from his mouth saying that “we don’t have the police here, so we need to protect ourselves”.

Covid-19

I started this project January 2020, and by February, the world was hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. This made the initial site research challenging not only because it was difficult to cross the *Øresund Bridge* between Sweden and Denmark but because Christiania itself was closed for outsiders. Even to cross over the border I needed a letter from Christiania stating that I was conducting research. This led to an interesting interaction with the border police:

Due to the *Corona* virus, there was a border to control at Copenhagen Airport, which meant we had to get off the train that was travelling from Sweden. As I approached the police officer behind the checkpoint, I knew there may be problems. From the research I had already conducted I knew that all Copenhagen police officers must patrol the area of Christianshavn as part of their training. It has been stated in the past that the police use the area as a sort of ‘training ground’ or ‘initiation’. The officer looked at my paper and passport, which clearly stated that I had a place to stay and was conducting research for my architecture thesis at the Lund University. Out of everyone who was checked I was the only one who was told to step back and wait. I obviously do not know that if the fact that it said CHRISTIANIA in large font at the top of the page had something to do with this, and I guess I will never know.

Eventually in mid-June, I was able to visit this site. This meant that I had already conducted a large amount of research by the time I went to site. This was helpful in terms of knowing a great deal about the area and transgression, however it meant that it was at times difficult to gain a fresh perspective. It was also not possible to gain a real understanding of the area in normal times, with none of the events being undertaken and less tourists than usual.

Figure 199

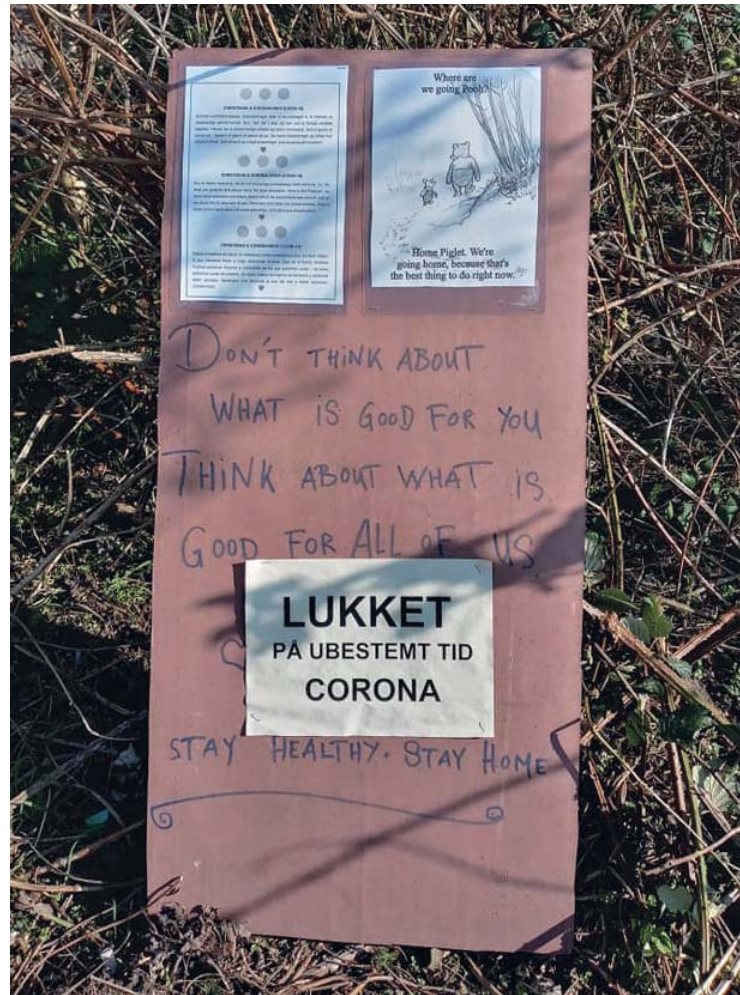


Figure 200



04

**ANALYSING
TRANSGRESSION**

“WE SHOULD LEARN FROM CHRISTIANIA, BECAUSE THE CITY OF THE FUTURE WILL NEED DIVERSITY AND ALTERNATIVE MODELS FOR HOW BUILDINGS AND CITY QUARTERS CAN DEVELOP”

- Kim Dirckinck-Holmfeld, Martin Keiding, and Marianne Amundsen (2004)

NORMALISATION

The threat to Christiania is normalisation. This may seem like a positive in terms of the space war: assault has been called off. However, this means that control through regulation is still present.

The beginning of the normalisation process began in the summer of 2004, where the parliament approved the new *Christiania Law* which meant among other things, that the old Christiania Law from 1989 & 1996 was quashed⁵⁸. Christiania's normalisation is about privatisation and use of spatial strategies to do so. The state's normalisation plan is one that is clearly using the built environment to control, remove, and stabilise: "The Normalisation Plan in Christiania demonstrates how states attempt to manage citizens through various strategies of control such as privatisation, urban renewal and forced expulsions."⁵⁹

Christiania has accepted some normalisation but denied others. Certain notions were employed: residents should pay tax on property; property should be privately owned instead of being managed by a cooperative and that squatting is an 'unfair' use of space. In this way they are somehow trying to make the space more *public* by making it more *private*. This is accomplished using power in order to conduct "evictions, relocations and demolition but also supported by logics and rationalities of order and control that find their basis in policing the limits of 'acceptable' and enforcing discipline to order this unruly space."⁶⁰

Normalisation can be found in the work of Michel Foucault, especially in *Discipline and Punish*, where he makes the connection between normalisation and power by stating "Like surveillance and with it, normalisation becomes one of the great instruments of power"⁶¹ It means to be part of a homogenous society, where anything different does not obtain the 'membership pass'. It is possible to demonstrate its differences by measuring its gap from to the 'norm'; the smaller the gap the more homogeneity is present. Foucault goes on to say that "It is easy to understand how the power of the norm functions within a system of formal equality, since within a homogeneity that is the rule, the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all the shading of individual differences"⁶².

58 See section 'rebel architecture'

59 (Amouroux, 2011, p. 235)

60 (Amouroux, 2011, p. 236)

61 (Foucault, 1977) - p.

62 (Foucault, 1977, p. 184)

What happens when the gap starts to widen? “Disciplinary punishment has the function of reducing gaps.”⁶³ At this moment that punishment comes in the form of fines from the government. As one resident told me:

You can't even put a small rail without the government coming round and giving the residents a fine. This fine from the state has in the past amounted to 1,000,000 DK a year for the whole of Christiania.

In a documentary from 2011 a resident tells the camera; “Well the phrase of normalising Christiania, is horrible and I think it's absolutely horrible. It sounds childish to me and very jealous that they cannot have it that people are having a good time while being poor.. that people are actually living a parallel society and they just can't have it, so they have started this normalisation process.”⁶⁴

We can question whether normalisation is such a bad thing? *In Freetown Christiania and The Space War* Østergaard gives his opinion “While the space produced by the Danish system has always allowed everyone to live and walk freely, Christiania showed that it has not provided everyone with the opportunity to live as they truly wished”⁶⁵. as the homogeneity steadily encroaches, the area may just become another alternative part of the city which does not cater for difference. One the reason that Christiania is still alive, and breathing is because of its difference.

Østergaard continues by questioning the future of the Freetown: “are there people enough, in the 2010s (or in this case the 2020's), willing to carry on the Christiania dream, with the same energy and faith as in the 1970s? And the next question: are the heirs of Christiania willing, not to normalise, but to adapt?”⁶⁶ This is in line with the concerns of a younger resident who I talked to:

In the course of this conversation, I find out that people who live in Christiania are averagely older than those in outside Christina, which is a concern in terms of fighting off normalisation.

Before the passing of the new *Christiania Law*, the government's Christiania committee arranged an open, idea-competition for a comprehensive plan development of the area. The competition proposals were strongly criticised by a dissatisfied jury: “from an architectural point of view, none of the four real proposals offer a sufficient basis for a planning process” wrote Meret Ahnfeldt-Møllerup. Another jury member, Stig L. Anderson was equally frank in his remarks: “... it is regrettable and disgraceful that the competition proposals do not to a

63 (Foucault, 1977, p. 179)

64 (Christiania: 40 Years of Occupation, 2014) Corneliusen, C.L. - 01:08

65 (Østergaard, 2013)

66 (Østergaard, 2013)

greater degree manage to reflect the diversity and originality that Christiania has enriched the Danish urban landscape with..."

Christiania has also countered the government's plans for normalisation with its own community driven planning proposal, which after eight months of internal workshops and meetings gained consensus at the common meeting before being published in early 2006. This development plan was awarded the Initiative Award of the Society for the Beautification of Copenhagen in November 2006.

Having only been investigating this site for a few months and having only stayed there two weeks, I do not feel entirely qualified to talk about the Freetown's future so I will use a quote from an architect and former resident; "The future of Christiania depends very much on Christiania own ability to get its act together and amount whatever is necessary... So, the sympathy for Christiania is on Christiania's ability to be the calendar picture, to be the different place, the place that produces unexpected results, because they have an unexpected and unusual situation. So, when they start doing that, they begin fortifying and stop making alternatives and you know initiatives that are fun, that are creative then they start having the sympathy from the population and it is much easier for the government to break up and really put them to the knees"⁶⁷

If transgression is about stretching the limits, then Christiania has spent the last 50 years doing so. The issue is that it has potentially pushed as far as it could go. At this present time, it feels too dangerous to push the limit any further and past breaking point, jeopardising the future of Christiania.

I previously mentioned that transgression is a paradox, and if Christiania is going through a process of becoming the norm, it must transgress what has previously been. In order to do that it must continue to develop, it must continue to resist attempts at 'normalisation', even in the face of the threat of its extinction - The 'resistance army' that I came across on the first day confirms the willingness of some to fight back against any imposed authority. They must find ways to innovate and transgress what they currently are and how they use the space available to them. In this way, I believe that spatial and architectural transgression still has a valuable part to play in the future of Christiania.

67 (Christiania: 40 Years of Occupation, 2014) - 01:10



Figure 201

TOOLS OF TRANSGRESSION

In the previous two chapters I have tried to explain some of the principles of architectural transgression and how the term has been an integral part of Christiania's resistance. I have shown what happens when this type of transgression stretched the possibilities of what architecture can be. Using the theory and the case study as the basis, for this section explains tools of transgressive architecture which I found to be important.

EXEMPLARY ACTIONS

Exemplary actions can be understood as catalysts that change the environment. If a space needs exploiting to achieve its potential using an expression manifestation, how small it may be will make a change that might have a butterfly effect⁶⁸.

In Christiania, the flapping of the wings could be said to have happened the moment of *first blood*. If this small initial transgression had never occurred, the history of Christiania might have looked very different. This shows us that an act of transgression does not need to be large to have a lasting impact.

The breaking of this hoarding also shows how one must gradually stretch the boundaries. On that day, not only was physical boundary was crossed, but also a social one by ‘illegally’ stepping over that threshold. The transgression could have stopped here but as the years went on the transgressors kept pushing to see how much they could accomplish. In this way the plan of the transgressors is not to step over and escape this line but make use of the line itself. It is about stretching this line and creating a space inside it.

Figure 202



⁶⁸ The butterfly effect is a property of chaotic systems by which small changes in initial conditions can lead to large-scale and unpredictable variation in the future state of the system.

The fact that one person breaks the norms and partakes in a certain activity might lead others to copy. I can imagine that the first person/set of people to roll in a wagon were seen as slightly odd for wanting to live in this peculiar structure, but as time went on others followed suit. Even to the extent that at present around 80% of the new architecture in Christiania has its origins in a wagon, thus becoming the norm.

Even though not apparent at first you, see glimpses of similarities between the architecture in Christiania. Due to the closeness of the community and the way people share knowledge and ideas, it is possible to learn from one another's transgressions. In the same way the rules for one house can apply to another, so can the methods of transgression. The residents never needed to look far to find inspiration and exemplary actions.

With the rebel architecture, it seems the residents were competing to see who could be the most eccentric, with an air of let's see what is possible. Whether planning or architectural, there were no real rules to follow. This could have only come about in a system where the only limitations were one's imagination.

COUNTER-DESIGN

Counter design has as its core principle being the devil's advocate. It is about questioning the strategy, with the objective of changing the structure of the process and ultimately the design. Emerging doubts are an integral part of this process, and it is important to act on these doubts.

One of the many reasons Christiania is still alive is because the government has never really had a good idea of what to do with the area. Countless proposals have been put forward, but none have been successful. One of the reasons for this is because of consistent counter-design. During my research I had a meeting with Ole Lykke, at the Christiania archives, where he showed me some of the masterplan proposals that have been put forward by both the government and Christiania. Every time the government comes out with a new plan for the area, Christiania come out with their own. Almost like a game of fencing; with every lunge comes a riposte. With every design comes a counter design. With every attack comes a counterattack. The purpose of this was to show the absurdity and the lack of respect for the area that these plans showed.



Figure 203

In his opinion the best proposal for Christiania came from the architect Jens Thomas Arnfred. He was initially working for the state but became fed up with their terms, so started working for Christiania. In this way the architect switched sides in the space war, and thus becoming an architect of transgression.

You could say that the whole of Christiania is built on the notion of counter-design. From an architectural aspect they have looked at the norm and continuously decided to scrap it. This idea of designing contrary to the norm has meant that the free-standing buildings in the areas have a uniqueness to them that could not have come from any other circumstance.

Personally, the most interesting aspect of this comes from how the residents have transgressed the designed project and what one can consider as architecture. They saw what was happening beyond the walls of Christina and decided to have some fun. In many of the cases, by doing this they were ahead of their time. Principles which are becoming more and more popular in the discussion around architecture such as sustainability and upcycling of materials are the norm in Christiania's construction processes.

Figure 204



INDESTRUCTABLE DESIGN

With indestructible design I do not particularly mean it in the literal sense of the word. This is about creating architecture, which is so unique or indispensable, that its disappearance becomes difficult.

Whilst walking around Christiania the architecture gives you a sense that you are in an irreplaceable location and this is mainly because the unique design of the houses. The only way to achieve this is by pushing the boundaries of what can be accomplished in architecture.

The *6 Sans* is a perfect example of this because I cannot think of many other buildings like it. One of the reasons it is still standing is because of how distinctive it is. The government has ordered many of the houses along the lake to disappear because they say it blocks the views or some other random excuse. However, from what I can gather they have never asked for this *spaceship* to be demolished. You can distinctively see it from the frequented path on the other side of Christiania and I feel like it may cause too much commotion to propose that it disappear. It is just too iconic.

I feel the same can be said of so many of the iconic structures in this autonomous area. There do not seem to be attempts by the government to remove the flying roof which is the *Pagoden House* or the *Glass House* made of reused windows. There were a set of circumstances that allowed for these pieces of architecture to be built and when any architect or designer is confronted with these circumstances, they should make use of them. In Christiania this has become much harder to do because every design must go through the normal planning permissions that inhibits the creativity of the residents.



Figure 205

As mentioned earlier, the more work to a building the harder it becomes to destroy, both on a practical level as it would mean destroying the time and effort that has been put into a piece of architecture and most importantly someone's home. This is one of the reasons that all over Christiania you see that the residents always have their *weapons of mass constructions*, building materials which are not too far from their home. Here I steal the term that was used by resident Ole Kristiansen when talking about the construction in Christiania; "You know after the government posted our term on construction everybody keeps their construction material line ready. You know, it becomes this kind of small surrender if you let go of that so it is... the building materials are like weapons of mass construction, that we keep handy"⁶⁹.



Figure 206

Rice tells us that "structures, houses and spaces, form a guerrilla army of resistance. This is an army of materiality; battalions of junk materials, recycled scrap, brigades of metal sheets, tarpaulin, faeces, dirt, hoarding, laundry, fabrics, rope ties and woven canopies"⁷⁰. Although he is talking about squatter settlements in south Asia, the same idea can be applied to the architecture in Christiania.

Just as in times of conflict, weapons can be used to fight opposing forces, construction materials can be used as weapons to fight the *Space War*. Instead of using traditional weapons of the sword and guns, architecture can be the new 'weapon' of society.

69 (Christiania: 40 Years of Occupation, 2014) - 1:05

70 (Rice, 2015, p. 97)

TIME

Time can be the friend of transgression and its use can be vital. Just like transgression, the two options can be seen at either end of the spectrum. You can partake in an activity very quickly and suddenly or partake in an activity very slowly and gradually.

The guerrilla wagons are an example of this principle. Individually the wagons were moved into the site quickly allowing people to create a home within minutes. The government were caught by surprise and by the time they had any idea what to do about it there were already too many people living there. Every time a *Guerrilla Wagon* was rolled in, it was a tactical way of creating a home for a short period of time. It was the spontaneity of this action that made them so effective in this *Space War*.

The evolution of these wagons happened over a long period of time, and even 50 years on are being changed and adapted to meet the users' needs. Their slow and gradual modifications and additions allowed for them to go beyond the limit of transgression into the realm of normality. It is much more difficult to get rid of a whole house rather than a small little wagon and as time goes on it becomes harder and harder to destroy someone's home.



Figure 207

In *Kamoufleret Vogn*, Richard's concrete basement, apart from having a structural value it also has symbolic significance. Compared to the rest of the house, which is mostly made of wood, it would be very hard for anyone, whether that be the state of Denmark or the smaller state of Christiania to take it away from him.

The same can be said of the *Space War Barracks*. The *Kaktushus* has gone from being a residence of soldiers, to a hippy commune, where it was divided in two, then families that altered and extended them until you no longer recognised it as barracks. This process of modification, subtraction and addition has happened slowly over time and has only been slowed down by the authorities. The conversion of Stine's shed to an art shop shows that transgression is still possible if you take your time and you work within the limits, as strict as they may be. The law states that only if there is already an existing building on the site can a new one be put there. Whether the four poles and a roof, that were previously there counts as a building is subjective. It was removed and replaced with a semi-building where we can now see a shed. The next step will be a more permanent shop which we can classify as a building. By slowly pushing the limits it was able to just about work within the laws set by the government.

When talking to residents, they never stated that their architecture was finished. Much to the contrary, the continuous sound of construction shows that Christiania itself will never be complete. It is too often that we think of architecture being a subject which deals with *space* but not so much with *time*. If we think of architecture in terms of *time* as well as *space*, we may be able to get a better understanding of the subject. The design and production of building up to 'completion', only accounts for a small part of a building's lifespan, just as only a small part of a human's development happens in the womb. As Rende puts it we should see "architectural time as encompassing the use, re-use, destruction and decay of spaces"⁷¹.

Many times in architecture, it is the ability to assert control over a space and its users which is most revered. There is a sense of wrapping-up the project and users are expected to conform to the principles they set out. The best way to revolt against, is to transgress past notions and to loosen control whilst creating "an anti-patriarchal recognition that the users' experiences construct the architecture as much as the architect"⁷².

71 (Rende, 1999, p. 136)

72 (Sara, 2013, p. 54)

ARCHITECTURAL BODIES

Previously in this thesis, I state that one of the most important things to note about transgression is that it is subjective. While the aberrant nature of transgression implies bad behaviour, the act is not inherently good or bad; it is society which brands it one way or the other. Therefore, it is vital for society to go along with your mischief. Once an activity is no longer deemed to be mischievous, pervasive, and extravagant, it loses its status as an act of transgression.

For this reason, people are the biggest tool at the disposal of Christiania. One could say that Christiania itself is a protest and anyone who lives, parties, or has their bicycle fixed in its workshop is protesting. This shows that people themselves can make architecture which reflects society. When talking about the Occupy movement Rice says something which can also be said for this autonomous area: "This goes further than implying that buildings or public spaces are for society but extends the notion that architecture is by society and can represent, support and nurture alternative (sometimes radical) societies and cultural practices".

In 1975 when the *Rainbow Army* was called into action a large amount of people, just as in protests, transgressed the accepted norms of a space. What this shows is the power of transgressive actions. If enough people follow suit, a whole new conception of 'normality' may arise. When organising an event using architectural bodies, it can be seen as a tactic that is used to quash the government's strategy for the area. Just like in chess, a tactical move can disrupt the strategy of an opponent.

The ways in which the people of Christiania have used this space, potentially inadvertently, has eluded or at least delayed, land development programmes, which look to strategise cities by putting everything in its 'right' place. There should be individual settings within our cities, where permeable characteristics can be effective. Transgression has the ability to take boundaries and turn them into borders, by blurring both real and imagined lines.

This situation can be found in the area of Christiania which for the purposes of this thesis I called the *Town*. This part of Christiania is the first line of defence from the outside, but it is also a malleable space, allowing people within the city to think of Christiania as also theirs. In this way "A single 'space' can change function several times

a day and/or share multiple functions simultaneously. Instant architectures are effected that may last for a few moments or hours or perhaps may endure longer”⁷³.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the borders between Christiania and Denmark were closed to protect the citizens, many of which were elderly. From what I could understand by looking on the Christiania Facebook page and talking to residents, the people left in the Freetown were delighted that they had the area to themselves. This I feel is attitude is counter-productive.

With both tourists and *pushers* I feel like Christiania needs them as much as they need Christiania. They live in a state of mutualism where the relationship between two organisms both benefit from the association⁷⁴. Although there are many problems that occur between *The Town* and the rest of Freetown, they are stronger together. It thus becomes the first line of defence in this *Space War*.

⁷³ (Rice, 2015, p. 92)

⁷⁴ The oxpeckers eat ticks from elephants and the elephants allow them to do so because it helps their health. They tolerate their presence as a necessary evil.



Figure 208

05

CONCLUSION

“THE CITY HISTORICALLY CONSTRUCTED IS NO LONGER LIVED AND IS NO LONGER UNDERSTOOD PRACTICALLY. IT IS ONLY AN OBJECT OF CULTURAL CONSUMPTION FOR TOURISTS, FOR AESTHETICISM, AVID FOR SPECTACLES AND THE PICTURESQUE. EVEN FOR THOSE WHO SEEK TO UNDERSTAND IT WITH WARMTH, IT IS GONE. YET, THE URBAN REMAINS IN A STATE OF DISPERSED AND ALIENATED ACTUALITY, AS KERNEL AND VIRTUALITY.”

- Colin Ward, *Social Historian*
(1978)

TRANSGRESSING STUPID CITIES

In Rem Koolhaas's article *Are Smart Cities Condemned to Be Stupid?* He asks "where is the possibility of transgression?"⁷⁵ He argues that architecture no longer expresses public interests but the interests of private institutions and individuals. This has had a big impact on the cities and how we use them. Architects are partly to blame for cities becoming less adventurous and more predictable when they stopped pushing the boundaries of urban substance.

Instead, there has been a rise in the idea of 'smart' cities. These cities serve the purpose of solving all the problems that cities encounter such as climate change, ageing population and infrastructure. However, the possibility of solving these problems come at a cost. These costs are the usual suspects: gentrification, control and commercialisation of every inch of space. In many ways we already have smart cities. Intelligence comes from the use of memory, thoughts, and imagination. Smart cities discard the urban intelligence that has been accumulated over centuries. This urban intelligence has developed by exploration, transgression and by pushing the limits of how we live. "A new trinity is at work: traditional European values of liberty, equality and fraternity have been replaced in the 21st century by comfort, security, and sustainability"⁷⁶. The only way to bring back the values that we have come to admire in our cities is through transgression.

Since we increasingly live in a homogeneous society and our cities are representation of this homogeneity, I believe architectural transgression has important role to play in this *Space War*. Now more than ever we need transgression to resist uniformity of our cities, which leads them to become 'non-places'⁷⁷.

As humans we have some basic needs such as shelter, warmth, and food. If we look beyond this, as *individuals* we have different needs and they particular to each one of us. Currently, architecture provides us just about what we need but not that each one of us desires. As Henri Lefebvre puts it "To these anthropological needs which are socially elaborated, can be added specific needs which are not satisfied by those commercial and cultural infrastructures which are somewhat parsimoniously taken into account"⁷⁸

Transgression lies at the heart of the power of society to use space to create social relations. "More precisely, the architect is no more a

75 (Koolhaas, 2014)

76 (Koolhaas, 2014)

77 (Fartash-Naini, 2020)

78 (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 147)

miracle-worker than the sociologist. Neither can create social relations, although under certain favourable conditions they help trends to be formulated (to take shape). Only social life (praxis) in its global capacity possesses such powers - or does not possess them"⁷⁹

Lefebvre does note that individuals within these fields can "propose, try out and prepare forms... assess acquired experience, provide a lesson from failure and give birth to the possible"⁸⁰ The most important part of this statement is the idea of giving birth to the possible. Architects and designers alike should allow wiggle room for transgressions, even if they may not be the most radical of acts.

As artists, activist and self-proclaimed 'closet architect' Ion Sørvin writes in *The Power of Logic versus the Logic of Power* "A vast majority of architects, urban planners, designers and artists are more than willing to work for these concentrations of power despite the fact that these concentrations of power do not necessarily respect the rights of persons."⁸¹ At present we find ourselves in a situation where large concentrations of power determine the layout of our urban environments in most places in the world.

Whether it be the state or large companies, these powers have a major role in determining in layout of our urban environments. This creates a top-down system which rarely embraces the right of person. Sørvin goes on to say "It should be up to inhabitants take over and transform the buildings, their common space and their city according to their needs and desires"⁸². The new intelligent cities should be based on the ideals of cooperation, collaboration and diversity by seeing individuals as people who have the need space and freedom to be different.

In the words of Tschumi "None of these environmental tactics leads directly to a new social structure... Architecture and its spaces do not change society, but through architecture and the understanding of its effect, we can accelerate processes of change under way."⁸³

79 (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 151)

80 (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 151)

81 (Sørvin, 2013, p. 78)

82 (Sørvin, 2013, p. 78)

83 (Tschumi, 1996, p. 15)

WHAT TO DO?

Many readers right now might be questioning how powerful can architects be in modifying society. Tschumi is also very aware of the limitations which intellectuals and architects face; they are very unlikely to find themselves picking up arms in the front lines of revolutionary movement. So where does the role of the architect in all this lie? Tschumi presents three options:

1. We become conservative and maintain our role in giving form to existing political and economic principles.
2. We become critics and commentators who reveal the contradictions of architecture, at times detailing some possible actions.
3. “Finally, we could act as revolutionaries by using our environmental knowledge and in order to be part of professional forces trying to arrive at new social and urban structures.”⁸⁴ These actions can however only be the first step, intended to disturb a condition that itself might contain the spores of a better social and urban environment.

The purpose of this thesis was never to create something groundbreaking and drastically change the profession of architecture. It was my objective to plant the seed in people’s minds and to contemplate what they want their cities to be. The tools I presented previously can help architects to transgress and create cities which counter homogeneity by pushing the norms of the architectural practice.

Transgression is not possible or suitable in every occasion and it is important to tread carefully. However, if you see the opportunity to transgress grab it with two hands and do not let go. I do not ask anyone to change their methods of design, but if someone spends a few moments pondering the issues I have talked about in this thesis I will feel like I have done my job and this project has served a purpose. If the words never leave the paper they are printed on then I can at least say that it has given me the opportunity to question the profession and with that I am content.

“Eventually, what truly makes the city is not the letter of the law itself, but how it is lived out in every particular situation”⁸⁵

⁸⁴ (Tschumi, 1996, p. 9)

⁸⁵ (Vais, 2015, p. 109)



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