

**Future
Architecture
Platform**

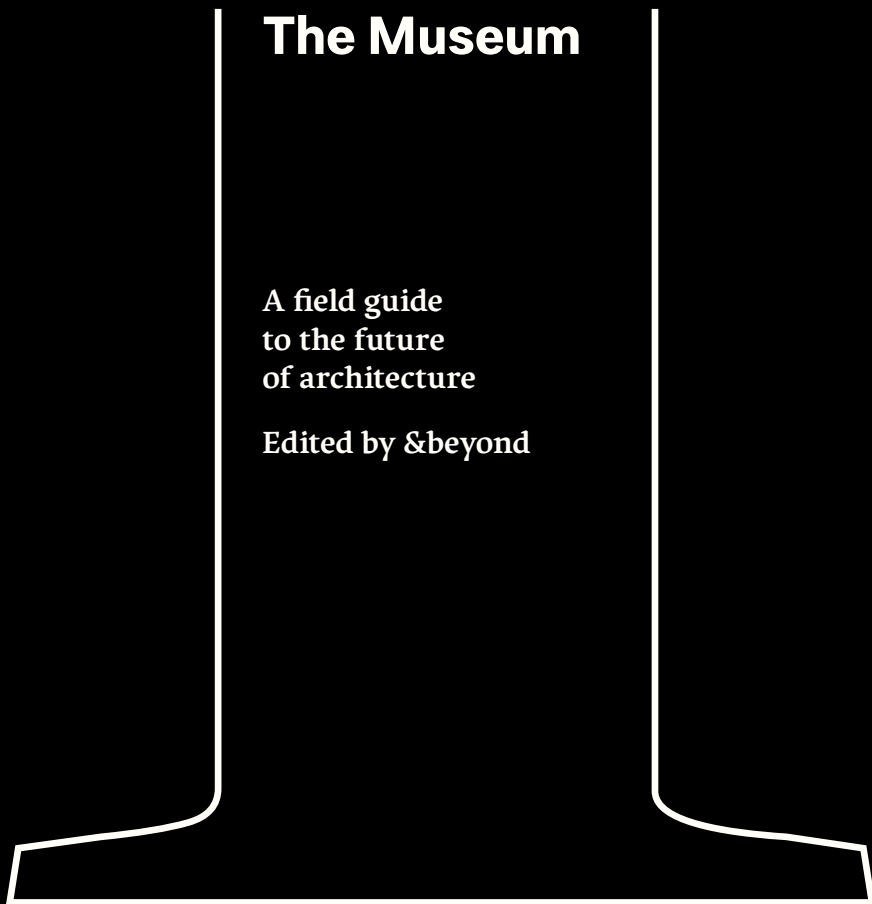


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The Museum

A field guide
to the future
of architecture

Edited by &beyond





Towards Collective Utopias

**The Oris lecture
series in Zagreb**



**Oris House
of Architecture,
Zagreb**

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By Ana Dana Beroš

Towards Collective Utopias

Zagreb

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Oris House of Architecture

The Oris House of Architecture in Zagreb, Croatia opened in January 2015 as a platform-venue for the promotion of architecture and culture, as a place where architects, designers, business people and other interested participants can meet and socialise. The aim is to promote architecture and the culture of living through organised lectures, workshops, exhibitions, discussions and other professional conferences and the venue has wide experience in collaborating on an international level. The Oris House of Architecture Association have published a magazine, *Oris*, since 1998 as well as numerous architectural books and catalogues.

In 2016 Ana Dana Beroš curated and organised a series of lectures at Oris House of Architecture in Zagreb to which she invited several participants of the Future Architecture platform to contribute. Here she outlines some key visions and projects by protagonists working on the front line of change.



Previous and this page:
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The Oris lecture series at the Oris House of Architecture, Zagreb was characterised by the notion of “architecture on hold” and the (im)possibilities of surpassing this all-too-familiar “stillness of the discipline”. Critical writing and research architecture seem to have taken over architectural design and building practice as the prime interest of young architects nowadays. In this respect, the idea of the Oris lecture series was to take the architectural

thinking of newer generations a step further, to new prospects of critical spatial interventionism. Simply put: to encourage us all to venture from building statements to building communities. For trained architects, it is crucial not to forget the basic architectural toolbox we were all taught in school, however exhausted and obsolete those tools might appear when struggling with urban realities at hand. Construction of social experiments and the creation of urban alternatives – the affordable utopias of the twenty-first century – must be embraced in the physical world too, together with the right to fail.

Rather than focusing on a single major event, this lecture series aimed to develop in six lectures both reflexive and interventionist tools for architecture students as well as interested parties, supporting self-organised investigation and action in ever-changing urban environments. A parallel, para-academic, educational programme was devised and debated at the Oris House of Architecture with the following central themes: the violence of architecture; the failure of architecture as the project of the future; the architectural manifestations of contemporary ruins; transformations of urban territories related to migration and building in marginalised communities.

The very first lecture *Weaponized Architecture* by Léopold Lambert (creator of *The Funambulist* magazine) strongly argued architecture's relevance as political weapon. According to Lambert, as architects we shouldn't avoid making "architecture a weapon" but rather use this weapon to inform our political agendas and manifestos and to define our roles in disruption of dominant mechanisms of power.

Ana Dana Beroš

Ana Dana Beroš is an architect and curator focused on creating uncertain, fragile environments that catalyse social change. She is the co-founder of ARCHIsquad - Division for Architecture with Conscience and its educational programmes Out of Focus: Architecture of Giving and urgentArchitecture - open advisory centres for citizens. Her interest in architectural theory and experimental design led Beroš to co-found Think Space and the Future Architecture platform. Her research project Intermundia on trans-European migration received a Special Mention at the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2014.

Weaponized Architecture





The lecture poignantly started with an example of the Rousseauist primitive shelter as a carrier of violence. Lambert stated that when we invent protection, we also invent the protocols for selecting who will benefit from the protection and who will not. Furthermore, when we invent the wall, we also invent the door, the locks, and the key that materialises the exclusivity of bodies protected by the shelter. From this argument on the very first violent act of creating the primitive shelter, the lecture presented several case studies of varying political degrees to demonstrate the idea of “weaponised architecture”: the military and civil occupation of Palestine, the construction of a new militarised capital city in Egypt, the social and racial urban segregation embodied in Parisian suburbs and the so-called humanitarian camp built for refugees and migrants in Calais. Lambert’s lecture concluded with a statement that architecture’s political innocence is an illusion, and that we as architects have to learn to anticipate and deal with the social consequences of the spaces we design.

Architecture After the Future

In *Architecture After the Future* the lecturer Ana Jeinić presented the idea, proclaimed by the social theorists such as Marc Augé and Franco Bifo Berardi, of the complete collapse of the concept of future. This is in opposition to twentieth century Futurist and modernist thinking in which the future is reliable and trustworthy. Our current reasoning is based on the awareness that the future is not so bright. So when our belief in the future as progress is irreparably shattered, how can we as architects adapt to this post-futurist condition and act accordingly? In Jeinić’s opinion, since an “architectural project is always a project of the future”, the described situation must have profound consequences for architecture as a discipline.



The lecture further explained tendencies and strategies for dealing with the crisis of the architectural project in a futureless world starting with “temporary architectures” and *recycling architectures* via *salvatorian architectures* – that feature neoliberal mutation of architectural utopianism – and ending with “ordering architectures” that propose the uncompromised recuperation of the architectural project as a means of introducing formal anchors to the city.

Previous page: The "Jungle" refugee camp, Calais, France © Léopold Lambert

This page:
Budu nost/Future
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*The Disposable
Human vs. Economies
of Solidarity*



Above: Entrance to Syrian refugee camp, Mytilini, Greece © Merve Bedir

Below: Leftover life jackets and wrecked boats, Mytilini, Greece © Merve Bedir

The Disposable Human vs. Economies of Solidarity lecture was part of Merve Bedir's ongoing research into the vocabulary of hospitality which started with the assertion that attitudes about refugees begin with the words we ascribe them. According to Jacques Derrida in *Of Hospitality*, the first act of violence is the imposed translation of asking for hospitality in a language that by definition is not our own. In her search for contemporary absolute hospitality, described by Kant in the Greek city-state as an independent condition until the point that the migrant is asked his or her name, Merve Bedir explained the diverse vocabulary that reveals the ambiguous legal and political context of refugees in Turkey. The lecture presented things, technologies and spaces related to migration and confinement from different contexts: from Istanbul to a small town of Gaziantep on the Turkish-Syrian border, over to Mytilini on Lesbos in the Aegean, the river Maritsa in Bulgaria and Amman in Jordan and to Melbourne in Australia.

In her work Merve Bedir investigates and supports local initiatives by migrants and refugees that attempt new forms of solidarity and representation, by testing in action the terms under which we can live together in spite of our differences. According to Bedir it is the key question of everyday utopia.

Ruincarnations by Miloš Kosec revealed to us the fascination the post-industrial age has with ruins, from benign objectification of the so-called "ruin-porn" to the complex commodification and gentrification processes of deindustrialised urban areas. According to Kosec commodification of decay is only possible if it remains an artistic, social or political "other", since the transformation of the ruin to mainstream, contemporary architecture erases its primordial virtues. Kosec searches for the subversive potentials of ruins; for him the conflict between existing structure and new use is a productive architectural subversion per se, so he examines the qualities of decay that are worth saving, and also reflects in urban planning of the sustainable cities of today.

In *Building (ourselves) Together* via a transdisciplinary collective, Aman Iwan agitates for an alternative and locally-committed architecture in opposition to the homogenising global trends of architecture serving capital. The collective has experience in exploring "social truths" in territories of marginalised populations in Chile, Brazil, Algeria, Burundi, Benin and Afghanistan. They create "architecture for the people, by the people". Their methodology is one of exchange, rather than imposition, in order to learn from each other and to preserve the vernacular knowledge of building and living together.

Ruincarnations

*Building (ourselves)
Together*

The collective is eager to share this knowledge and their experiences in a periodical publishing that will connect architectural interventions in a global micro-scale system. The very first issue of the periodical entitled *Building (ourselves) Together* will nourish experiences, traditions, and the vernacular knowledge of concerned populations, but also share architectural thoughts from “the era of megastructures” and its charismatic protagonist Yona Friedman. As a form of reciprocal learning, the “mook”, as Aman Iwan call their magazine/book, is published in French and English and will be translated into all the local languages of the territories under their investigation.

The *No Future – Building the Present* lecture by urbz, an experimental platform from Mumbai, advocated immediate “architectural action in the streets”. It is about engaging with the present conditions of an existing city, without considering the future. The behaviour of genuine city-dwellers in everyday life is, in their view, the point of departure for any critical spatial intervention. According to urbz, architectural practice must leave the future behind and seize the present instead – beyond the aseptic conditions of an academic research or the secured walls of an architectural studio.

Urbz’s way of embracing the present at hand, regardless of how challenging and disturbing this reality is, resonated with my activist work with the Are You Syrious? volunteer group in a refugee camp on the Macedonian-Greek border which was taking place at the same time as their Oris lecture in Zagreb. The confrontation with the “extreme now” in a contested territory, the need to make choices with immediate real life consequences, reminded me of the value of “intimate utopias”.

No Future – Building the Present

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These are only humble steps towards “collective utopias”, imaginations of social orders that provide alternatives to the present. (Self)infusion with hope, and the right to envision everyday miracles in order to bring forward their materialisation, is a way of thinking about the future – that was encouraged by the Oris lecture series. ■