

W I D



Die approbierte gedruckte Originalversion dieser Diplomarbeit ist an der TU Wien Bibliothek verfügbar  
The approved original version of this thesis is available in print at TU Wien Bibliothek.



TECHNISCHE  
UNIVERSITÄT  
WIEN

DIPLOMARBEIT

## **VIC - Territorializing the Extraterritorial**

ausgeführt zum Zwecke der Erlangung des akademischen Grades  
eines Diplom-Ingenieurs / Diplom-Ingenieurin unter der Leitung

Prof. Pier Paolo Tamburelli

E253-06

Forschungsbereich Gestaltungslehre und Entwerfen

eingereicht an der Technischen Universität Wien  
Fakultät für Architektur und Raumplanung

von

Ruslan Dimov  
01622463

Wien, am 27 September 2023

## ABSTRACT

Die Arbeit verortet die Vereinten Nationen in der Stadt Wien, indem die existierende Situation vor der Institution zu einer klar definierten Plattform umgestaltet wird.

Der obere Teil der Plattform bietet eine Bühne für verschiedene Szenen des öffentlichen Lebens - von spontanen alltäglichen Aktionen bis hin zu hochgradig formalisierten Aktivitäten, während der untere Teil als *Boîte a Miracle* gedacht wird und die materielle Arbeit der spezifischen Agenturen des Wiener Hauptquartiers zeigt.

Durch die Positionierung an der Wagramer Straße - eine Straßenachse, die einige stadtkonstituierende Monumente in sich versammelt - wird das VIC (Vienna International Centre) Teil eines größeren Ganzen.

## ABSTRACT

The work seeks to territorialize the United Nations in the city of Vienna by redefining the existing situation in front of the institution as a clearly defined platform.

The top of the platform provides a common ground for the various scenes of public life - from spontaneous everyday actions to highly formalized activities, whereas the bottom is imagined as a *boîte a miracle* containing the material work of the specific agencies housed by the Viennese headquarter.

Through the location at the Wagramer Straße - a street axis collecting some of the monuments that constitute the city - the VIC (Vienna International Centre) becomes part of a bigger whole.



Die approbierte gedruckte Originalversion dieser Diplomarbeit ist an der TU Wien Bibliothek verfügbar  
The approved original version of this thesis is available in print at TU Wien Bibliothek.

# **VIC - Territorializing the Extraterritorial**

Ruslan Dimov

## **CONTENT**

### **VIENNA**

12	<b>CITY FORM</b>
16	<b>KAISERMÜHLEN</b>
22	<b>RED HOT SPOTS</b>

### **TWO ESSAYS ON MUSEUMS, SQUARES AND THE POLITICAL**

30	<b>FUN PALACE / HITO STEYERL</b>
40	<b>MASP / HANNAH ARENDT</b>

### **UNITED NATIONS**

50	<b>UNO-CITY</b>
54	<b>4 EXTRATERITORRIES</b>
58	<b>MATERIAL PRODUCTION</b>



## **VIC**

68	<b>INTRO</b>
72	<b>SITE PLAN</b>
76	<b>PLAN - TOP LEVEL</b>
78	<b>GRAMMAR - TOP LEVEL</b>
90	<b>PLAN - BOTTOM LEVEL</b>
94	<b>LONGITUDINAL SECTION</b>
96	<b>CROSS SECTION</b>
98	<b>DETAIL SECTIONS</b>
104	<b>VIEW OLD CITY</b>
108	<b>VIEW PLATFORM</b>
112	<b>VIEW KAISERWASSER</b>
116	<b>VIEW UNO-CITY</b>
120	<b>VIEW UNOOSA</b>
122	<b>CITY PERSPECTIVE</b>
124	<b>PICTURE CREDITS</b>
126	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>

# VIENNA



## CITY FORM

Up until the 19th century Vienna - the city on the Danube - had unlike Paris, London or Rome no direct relation to the river. The area of Danube was rather defined by a hostile territory of meandering canals and as a result the city unavoidably grew on the south of the river.

At the time, the old city of Vienna was surrounded by monumental fortifications stretching over five kilometers in length. Those served as a defence mechanism against potential invaders since the late 13th century and played a significant role in the defence of the city in the 17th century with the growing threat approaching from the East. Yet, in the 19th century the barrier against invaders appeared obsolete in the context of an expanding modern city and so the city wall got replaced by a monumental street known as the *Ringstraße*.

In parallel to this development, with the major flood catastrophes from 1830, 1849 and 1850 the need for seriously tackling the natural threat caused by the unregulated Danube river became unavoidable. The process of regulating the territory of meandering canals was defined by the following goals:

*„- Overcoming of Danube current and its aurora as an obstacle; construction of permanent crossings and current bridges; reduction of the separating effect.*

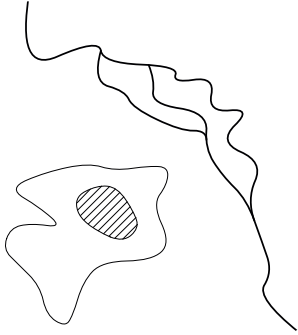
*- Obtaining usable land for urban expansion; removing or overcoming obstacles to further expansion of the city in its own right; realizing the notion of a concentrically growing city.*

*- To develop Vienna as a city on the Danube“<sup>1</sup>*

Whereas in former times the natural habitats were rather undefined and the city was constituted by clearly defined borders in the form of a city wall, this relation got nowadays reversed by a sprawling urbanisation over completely regulated systems of "natural" elements, like the Danube. Thus the river became a constitutive part of the city of Vienna, itself growing more and more towards the side of the once hostile territory by domesticating land for building constructions, one part of it being Kaisermühlen.

<sup>1</sup> BREIT, „Die Aufgabe >Donnaubereich Wien<“, *Das Wiener Modell* (1995), p. 33

The city and the river (18th century - 20th century)



# KAISERMÜHLEN



With the first crucial regulation of the Danube in the period from 1870-76 an area with the size twice bigger than the old city began to take shape in between the Old Danube - a remnant of the former river course - and the Danube river. It received its final form hundred years later after the second regulation of the river and the construction of the New Danube, a relief channel. Throughout the 20th century the very same area served as a kind of a testing ground for a series of (un)intended developments which emerged independent of each other and led eventually to a surrealist existence of four distinct sectors each of them telling the particular story of the time - a kind of *cadavre exquis* on a city scale.

### *Siedlerbewegung sector*

The area defining the west end of *Kaisermühlen* developed already at beginning of the 20th century and is defined by small detached housing. Already at the beginning the citizen's of the area understood each other as part of the *Siedlerbewegung* - a movement of building self-constructed simple dwellings on the city limits with small gardens for food production, due to the housing shortage after WWI and organized collectively under the union Donauland.<sup>1</sup>

### *Donaupark sector*

Next to the *Siedlerbewegung* sector is situated the *Donaupark*, a remnant of the *Wiener Internationale Gartenschau 1964*. The expo had to develop the existing green areas as well as to connect the area to the city on the „other“ side of the Danube. It included a series of attractions, most of which were later on dismantled: a huge green field, an artificial lake, the *Donauturm*, a Lilliputian train which ran above the flowerbeds, five exhibition halls, a tower greenhouse, a lake stage, a reading hall, a cinema, cafés and restaurants. All those attractions were complemented by the twelve „Gardens of Nations“.<sup>2</sup>

### *Mini Manhattan sector*

The area known as the *Donau city* is characterised by a landscape of high rise buildings. Initially part of the *WiG64* the

area was freed for the execution of Viennas most prestigious as well as pricey project of the last century - United Nations headquarter. Soon after the completion of the construction process with its accommodating public infrastructure the city planned a Vienna-Budapest EXPO aiming to develop the sector but got eventually cancelled by a referendum. As a result Adolf Krischanitz and Heinz Neumann were commissioned with the development of a masterplan which foresaw the development of multifunctional area intended to define a new urban centre in the city of Vienna.

### *Red Vienna sector*

The area at the east part of Kaisermühlen is defined by a block structure. Here one could find social housing prototypes such as the *Goethehof* and *Schüttau Hof* developed during *Red Vienna* - a time period in between the world wars characterized by the government of SDAP (Social Democratic Workers' Party of Austria) in which among other social policies a series of housing projects got implemented as a way to solve the housing crisis at the time as well as to raise the class consciousness of the working class. The sector was also the place where one of the most contested battles of the *February uprising* took place.<sup>3</sup>

Today all four sectors host particular monuments some of which emerged as a result of the distinctive sectors like the Fernsehturm or Gänsehäufel, others defined the sectors like the UNO-City and others being just dropped like the *Vienna Islamic Centre* in the *Siedlerbewegung* sector. All those sectors as well as artefacts strangely coexist and enhance each other - it is only at the centre of *Kaisermühlen*, where the area is connected to the old city both visually and infrastructurally that it gets dissected into two pieces by the Wagramer Straße.

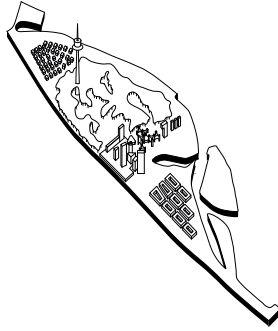
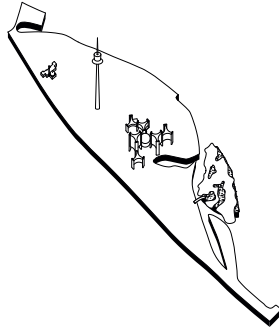
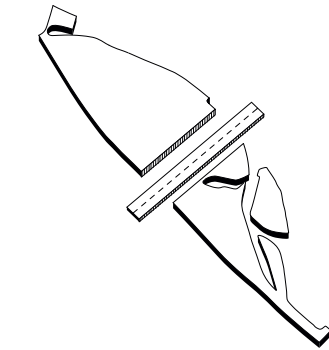
<sup>1</sup> Lilli LICKA, Ulrike KRIPPNER, 50 Jahre Donaupark: stadtplanerische Vision und Dimension, Vienna 2011, p. 14

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Wiener\\_Internationale\\_Gartenschau](https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Wiener_Internationale_Gartenschau), Accessed 8.6.2023

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wienerzeitung.at/h/zerschossene-fassaden-und-tiefe-wunden>, Accessed 14.5.2023



Constitutive elements: Sectors, Monuments, Wagramer Str.



## RED HOT SPOTS

*"A city is a plane of tarmac with some red hot spots of urban intensity."*<sup>1</sup>

In his student years Rem Koolhaas wrote a short story-manifesto for a city consisting of concrete points of urban intensity. Those figured as elements providing city-sense and ultimately as moments constituting the life in the city in all its complexity and contradiction. The city Koolhaas wrote about in *The Surface* remained anonymous as if he was exploring a condition characteristic to every big city.

In the context of Vienna - a city of almost two million inhabitants - it is possible to observe what Koolhaas described in his short story-tale. As a matter of fact, the city of Vienna provides already four particular points, which are connected both visually and infrastructurally by the metro line U1 and a street axis that originates at the border of the old city and dissolves shortly after *Kaisermühlen*. Those elements - *Stephansdom*, *Praterstern*, *Reichsbrücke* and *VIC* - have emerged over the centuries and are nowadays part of distinct areas lining up loosely along the street such as the *old city* defined by the Ringstraße, the *green axis* of Augarten-Praterstern, the *Donauinsel* - a 25km long and very thin island in the Danube river and *Kaisermühlen* - a surrealist area of four distinct sectors.

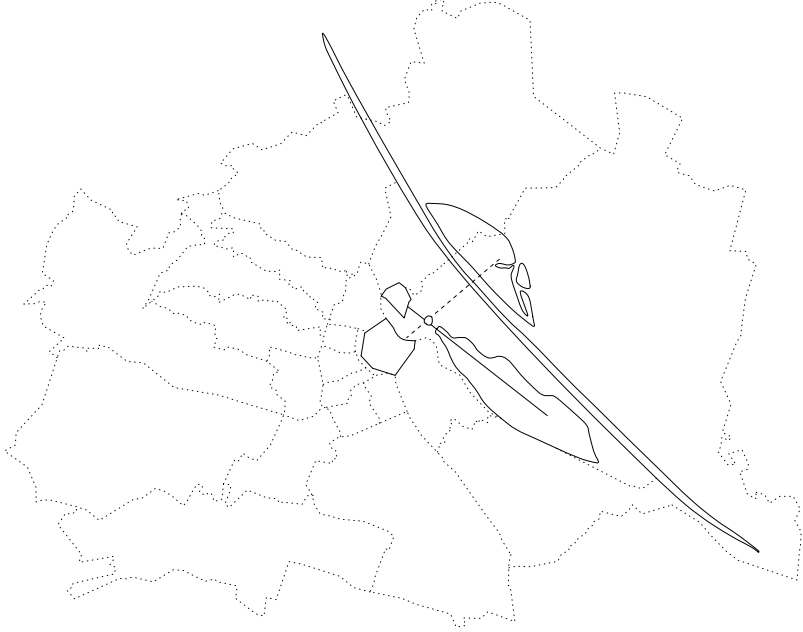
With the exception of the *VIC*, all three points have been clearly elaborated. The *Stephansdom* figures as one of the most recognizable objects in Vienna which hosts various national ceremonies behind its doors. The *Praterstern*, the biggest roundabout in Austria, is composed of a car street, an underground metro station and a train station to form Viennas most trafficked knot. The *Reichsbrücke* serves as a gate to the huge recreational of the *Donauinsel* beneath, as well as a joint connecting both sides of the river through its iconic lights.

The fourth element is the subject of this work.

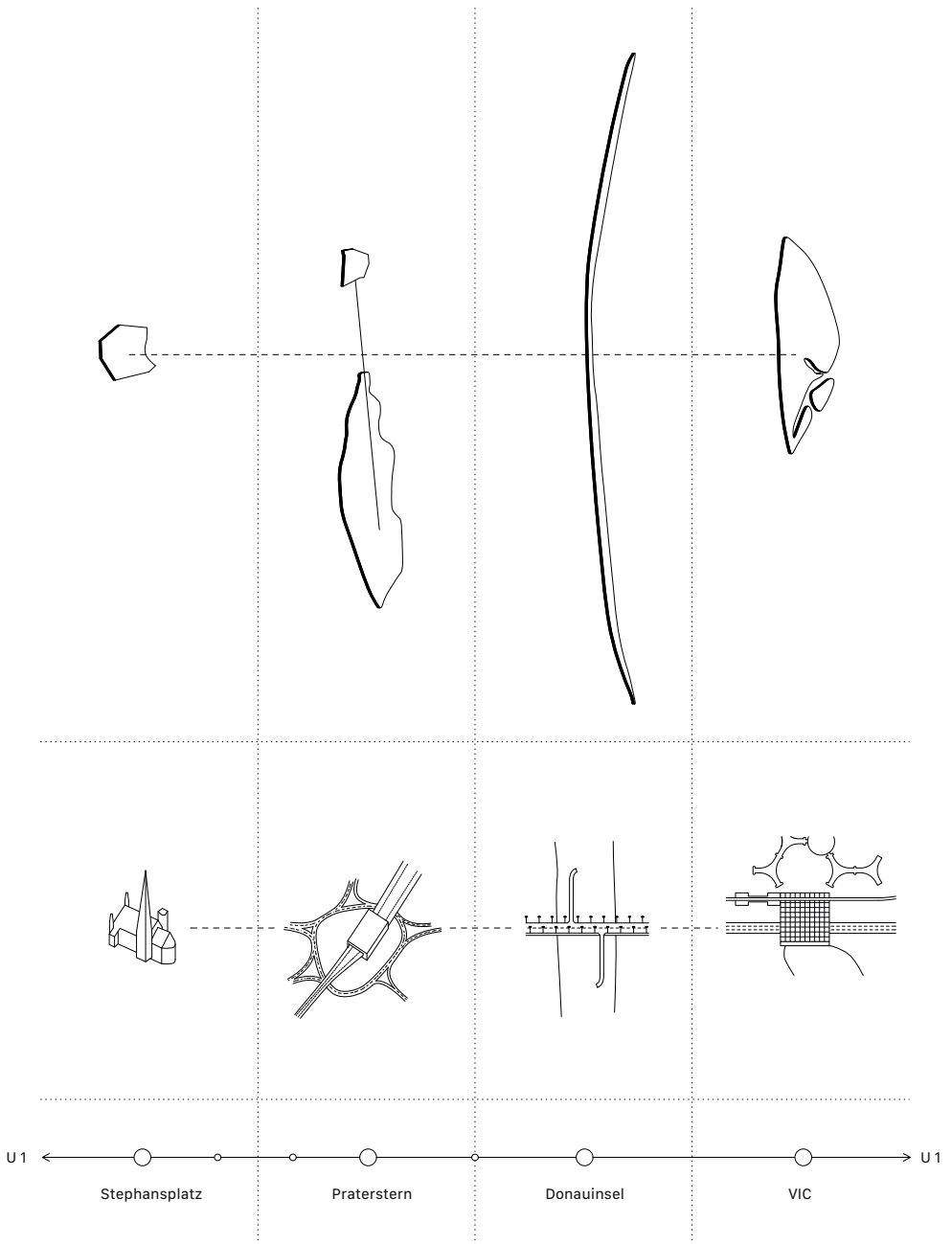
<sup>1</sup> <https://socks-studio.com/2014/12/05/rem-koolhaas-and-the-bourgeois-myth-of-new-york-gabriele-mastrigli-2013/>, Accessed 10.1.2023

Distinctive areas - Old city, Augarten/Prater, Donauinsel, Kaisermühlen









# TWO ESSAYS







## **FUN PALACE / HITO STEYERL**



*"Postproduction is not working on content in retrospect but creating the content. Editing is where the meaning is created."*<sup>1</sup>

Hito Steyerls work is about composition - about bringing disparate singularities into an organic whole. In the current moment, with newer media and with physical reality becoming mediatized to a large extent, editing becomes a much more expanded field. Thus taking into consideration politics and economics, nature and culture simultaneously, or to act as if there is no centre, is not an anomaly but the new normal.

By being active both as a writer and a filmmaker, Steyerls work gives the opportunity to observe the intensities this approach generates in two different fields, but also their intrinsic interrelation and impact on her own artistic production.

For example in *A Tank on a Pedestal: Museums in an Age of Planetary Civil War* the reader is confronted already at the beginning with a series of questions concerning the role of the art institution in an age that is defined by planetary civil war. Shortly one gets immersed by a world, in which time turns into a loop, where the present is swallowed by history. The process reaches its climax, when one realises that Alfonso Cuarons movie *Children of Men* is not a fictive dystopia, but a lightweight variation of the bare reality.

The practice of collecting and distilling, relating and framing data is even more present in Hito Steyerls last exhibition at the Serpentine Galleries. In *Power Plants* she addresses the notion of Power under the premiss of *power being the necessary condition for any digital technology*. In order to give an account to the complex networks of authority that shape the existing environment a collectively augmented reality app was produced, which gives the possibility to virtually set foot in the *factual* reality of the area surrounding the gallery, recorded as one of the most socially uneven boroughs in Europe. Whereas inside the dark gallery spaces AI predicted plants grow precisely 0,04 seconds out of the future in between a landscape of future unknown plants, fictitious quotes, and human testimonies - one of which by Federica Campagna:

*"There is no secret magic. Miracles happen every day, they usually just go unnoticed."*

It is not a coincidence that in her lecture for the Power Plants exhibition, Hito Steyerl advocated for Magic as probably the last possible mean to preempt the future.<sup>2</sup>

### *Can museums do Magic?*

During the sixties in post-war England the issue of *leisure*<sup>3</sup> received particular attention with the growing workplace automation from both political circles. Whereas the Liberals pledged for newly organized recreational and educational opportunities, the Conservatives argued for new consumerist ventures. It is in this context that Joan Littlewood, a theatre producer famous for her agitprop street performances and founding the Theatre Workshop in Londons East End, approached the architect Cedric Price, who embraced the emerging technologies of cybernetics, game theory and computers. Her ambition was, as described by Stanley Mathews, to create a new kind of theatre - not of stages, performers, and audiences, but a theatre of pure performativity and interaction - a synthesis of London's public gardens, its music halls, and the life of its neighbourhoods and streets. Shortly afterwards the idea magnetized many of the visionaries at that time, among whom were Gordon Pask, Roy Ascott, Frank Newbie and Yona Friedman, in order to create what at the beginning would go under code names such as *infra-machinery*, *laboratory of fun*, *short-term toy*, until it was finally baptized as the *Fun Palace*.

It would have contained a Fun arcade, a Music area, a Science playground, an Acting area, a Plastic area, screens at various points on which closed-circuit television will show, without editing, whatever is going on at a number of places in and out of London, Relaxation area, an Area for large volume activities such as rallies, concerts, conferences, theatre and screenings. The Fun arcade for example, as if described by Steyerl herself, would be full of the games and test that psychologists and electronic engineers devise for the service of industry or war - knowledge will be piped through jukeboxes. All this was

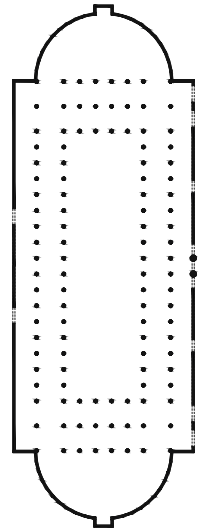
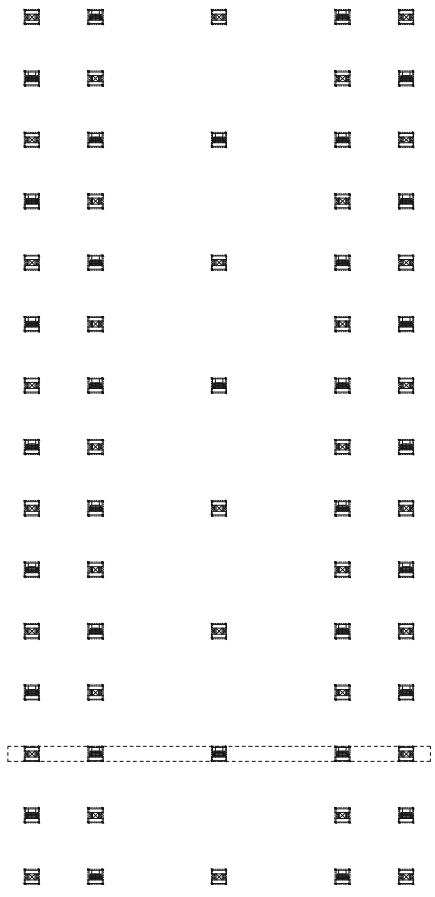
intended as a 24/7 running machine, relentlessly adapting to and shaping the actions of its users.

If one shifts the attention for a brief moment from the programmatic arsenal to the underlying structure, it becomes clear that the Fun Palace was not a psychedelic exercise á la Archigram, but a precisely defined piece of architecture (unlike what, its creator used to say). As a matter of fact it would have been built, if it was not for the bureaucratic opposition of the local borough authorities. Thus it wont be a surprise if in the process of distilling the plans one is only left with 75 towers, incorporating the fire escape stairs and elevators, and starts to recognize a Basilica in the floor plan, which was actually the Fun Palace of ancient Rome before being hijacked by Christianity. The same process applied to the section shows a service level in the basement, four rows of towers and a giant gantry crane, that would service the continuously morphing environment by repositioning objects across its grounds.<sup>4</sup> This becomes evident at its utmost in Cedric Prices drawings for a movie script to *appetize* the project, where the rigid framework is slowly invaded by a series of scenarios.

Yet, contrary to the emphasis on structure, what most drawings of Cedric Price share, from the most beloved to the most abhorred, was its eradication. But what at first sight might seem like a sign of its insignificance points towards the exact opposite. Thus showing that architectures presence is reversely proportionate to its use.

Going back to the initial question, it becomes clear that the Fun Palace offers no alternative to its answer. It solves no problems. Not only that, but it is an incubator for problems, a laboratory for the cultivation for forms of otherness, a stage of 2.5 million cubic meters where virtual reality does not replace the actual reality, but only wakes a critical awareness of yesterdays future, or today's present.

Thus it is worth considering the reformulation of the initial question from ‚Can museums do Magic?’ to ‚How can museums allow for Magic to occur?’. Expanded editing could be a starting point.



Comparison in scale of the Fun Palace and Basilica Ulpia

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.artforum.com/features/techniques-of-the-observer-hito-steyerl-and-laura-poitras-in-conversation-223846/>, Accessed: 14.8.2023

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boMbdtu2rLE>, Accessed: 12.4.2023

<sup>3</sup> MATHEWS, Stanley: *The Fun Palace: Cedric Price's experiment in architecture and technology* in: *Technoetic Arts*, 3, 2005, p. 79

<sup>4</sup> HARDINGHAM, Samanta: *Cedric Price - Works 1952-2003. A Forward Minded Retrospective*, London 2016, p. 124

\*The essay was initially developed at the institute of Raumgestaltung





## **MASP / HANNAH ARENDT**



*“Alles Denken ist Nachdenken, der Sache nach-denken. Ich lebe in der modernen Welt und selbstverständlich habe ich in der modernen Welt meine Erfahrung.”<sup>1</sup>*

In *The Human Condition* Hannah Arendt introduces the notion of active life, or *viva activa*, through the trichotomy of *action*, *work*, and *labor*. Even though labor and work have come to be used as synonyms nowadays Arendt uses the two notions in order to designate two distinct human activities. Labor is the cyclical activity concerning the bodily reproduction like eating, sleeping, cooking. For this reason the outcome of labor is always a perishable good and because of its nature bound to the private realm of the house. Work, on the other hand, concerns the fabrication of lasting objects such as furniture and pertains to a linear temporality considering the fabrication process. The final outcome of work is to be found at the public marketplace or *willhaben*, where it is destined to be exchanged among people. Yet, what work and labor share is the disinterest in the public realm as the space of the political. To execute the activity of labor it is already enough to live in a cottage in the middle of nowhere and just hope you never get a caries. A precondition for work to occur is a multiplicity of subjects, or as Arendt writes a multiplicity of *producers of products*<sup>2</sup>. What is intrinsic to this activity is the inherent negation of the possibility for the formation of a common world. People are driven to the public market place not because of their interest in other people, but in products. It is this substitution of speech for goods that Karl Marx constitutes as the fundamental self-alienation intrinsic to capitalism, which gives rise to solutions that are grounded in individualism from the outset (think of gyms, electric cars, primaklima).

In contrast to labor and work, action only occurs with people through speech and deed. It does not occur in the privateness of the house, nor in the publicness of the marketplace. Its incentive is neither ones biological constellation, nor others commodities. Arendt recognises as a precondition for action the human plurality, which constitutes the dialectic character of man - being equal and distinct. Equal, in the sense of having the

possibility to understand each other and distinct, in the sense of being able to proactively distinguish their unique selves beyond the physiological affections. Intrinsic to the human plurality was that every man received it with the physical birth, but could only activate it through action in the form of speech - mans second birth. The second birth would naturally occur among people.

But if action happened in an agonistic manner among people, it is worth looking in to how ancient greeks conceptualized the space of the political. Arendt emphasises that the lawmaker, as well as the architect, were treated as craftsman, who could come from abroad and therefore didn't need to be citizens of the polis. The work, they were expected to do *-law and wall-*, was considered prepolitical.

*"Before men began to act, a definite space had to be secured and a structure built where all subsequent actions could take place, the space being the public realm of the polis and its structure the law; legislator and architect belonged in the same category."*<sup>3</sup>

Particularly, the task of the architect, turns obvious if one looks at the city plan of the greek polis of Priene. It depicts how the clear differentiation between labor, work and action would also manifest in formal terms in the city fabric - in gray one can recognize the microscopic dimensions of the space of labor and work and the considerably monumental void in white for the space of action. But architects major contribution was the definition of the borders of the polis - of an outside, which in retrospect allowed for the polis to occur - freedom through limitation. Considering the role of the architect in predefining the space for political activity in ancient greece and its atrophy in the modern world as diagnosed by Arendt, it is worth asking if architecture can contribute to this realm - if not directly then subversively.

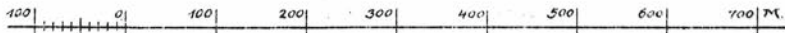
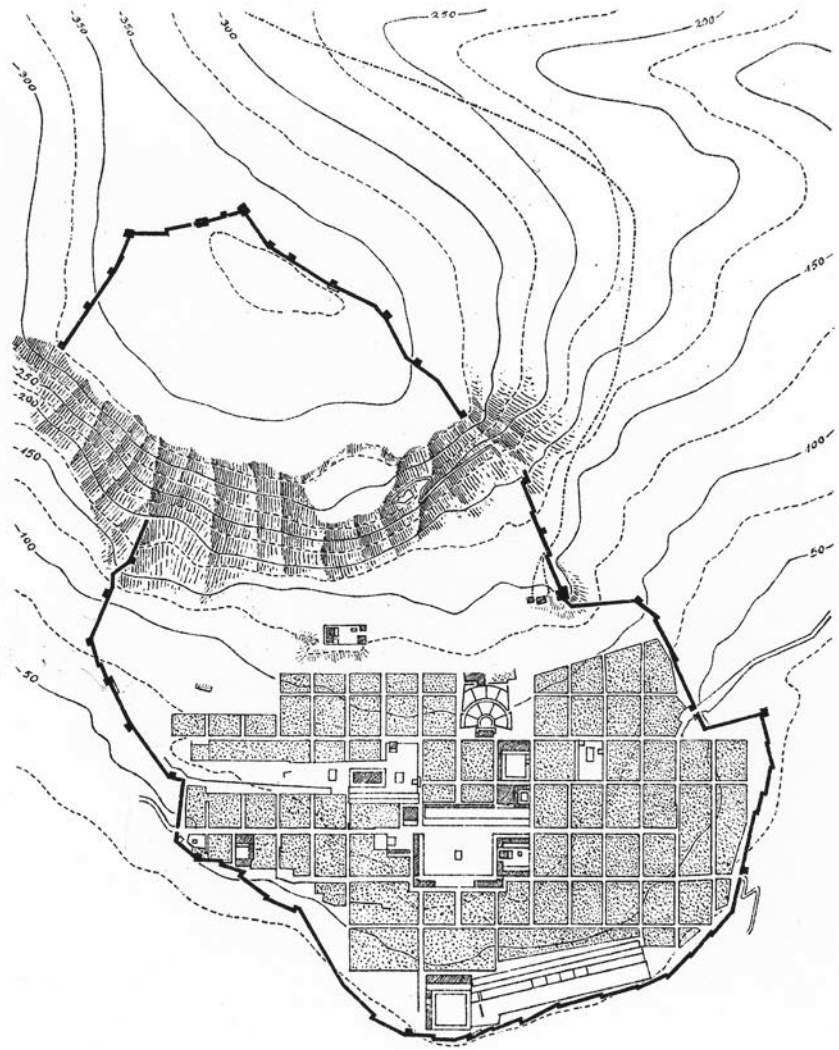
### *Lina Bo Bardi - Brazil - MASP*

Lina Bo Bardi was born in Rome, where she also studied architecture. Considering Rome's historical past, it is by no surprise that her education went more into archaeology than composition - *an academic nostalgia*, which was also the reason why promptly after her graduation she went to Milan to work for Gio Ponti.

At his office she received the opportunity to gather experience on different scales as a practitioner - in her words, it went as follows: "Work was from 8 in the morning until midnight, Saturdays and Sundays included. The work: from the designing of teacups and chairs, from fashions, that is, clothing, to urban projects such as the 'Albano' (a spa in Veneto). Activities in the office went from the construction of the 'Montecatini' to organizing the Decorative Arts Triannuals and editing magazines. So I came into direct contact with the real problems of my profession."<sup>4</sup>

At the age of 26, she would open her own architectural office in Milan, but due to the circumstances - the midst of Second World War and Italy being under German occupation - she would be mostly engaged with illustration and writing and eventually ran the *Domus* magazine for some time, until it went down.

In 1946, shortly after the war, she accompanied her husband Pietro Maria Bardi to Rio de Janeiro. Accompanied by MoMA's catalogue *Brazil Builds*, whom she described as "a lighthouse shining over a field of death"<sup>5</sup> and meeting the people represented in it at the IAB (Brazilian Architect's Institute), amongst others Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer and Burle Marx, she got encouraged to stay in Brazil. Later on, she would describe her decision as follows: "I became a naturalized Brazilian citizen. When one is born, one chooses nothing, one just happens to be born. I was not born in here, but I chose this country to live in. For this reason, Brazil is my country twice times over, it is my 'Country by choice', and I feel like a citizen of all its cities, from Cariri to the Minas Gerais Triangle, the cities in the countryside and on its borders."<sup>6</sup> Oscillating between the great achievements of the Brazilian avantgarde and her passion for the vital energy of the Brazilian indigenous



City of Priene

culture led her to the definition of *arquitetura pobre*, which she explored through exhibition, theatre and architecture.

One of the most prominent examples of this attitude is the Museu de Arte de São Paulo, which after a ten years lasting construction process had its inauguration in the autumn of 1968. From the beginning MASP housed a ballroom, which she designed as a civic hall, a library, a theatre, a restaurant, a depot, temporary exhibition spaces, picture gallery and a monumental belvedere, which Lina Bo Bardi brought ingeniously together by taking advantage of the natural topography. Thus conceiving an architecture that is not violent, but powerful in its acknowledgment of the existing reality in all its complexity and contradiction.

*"Power is actualized only where word and deed have not parted company, where words are not empty and deeds not brutal, where words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities, and deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish new relations and create new realities."*<sup>7</sup>

Even though commonly known for the box carried by two giant red frames, which were painted red only in 1990 in order to protect the concrete, it is worth considering the platform underneath it which led John Cage to describe MASP as an *Architecture of freedom*<sup>8</sup>. Designed as a monumental public stage<sup>12</sup>, which as envisioned by Lina Bo Bardi would host open air exhibitions, playing children, public discussions, political demonstrations, concerts etc., it made an *ordinary* occurrence appear *extraordinary*.

*"Monumentality does not depend on 'dimensions', as such. The Parthenon is monumental, despite its reduced scale. Fascist constructions (in Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy) are not monumental but elephantine, in all their bloated arrogance, their defiance of logic. What I call monumental has nothing to do with size or 'pomp' but relates to a sense of collectivity, that is, collective consciousness."*<sup>9</sup>

Nowadays one can understand the actuality of it as a place of collective freedom<sup>10</sup> when one thinks of the Bolsonaro protest in 2020.

*"If the problem is fundamentally political and economic, then the part played by the ,agent' in the field of ,design' is, despite everything, crucial. It relates to what Bertholt Brecht called ,the ability to say no'. Artistic freedom has always been ,individual', but true freedom can only be collective."*<sup>10</sup>

By this architectural gesture Lina Bo Bardi proved that even though architecture is prepolitical, architects agency is not necessarily innocent.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9SyTEUi6Kw&t=12s>, Accessed: 29.8.2023

<sup>2</sup> ARENDT, Hannah: *The human condition*, Chicago 1958, p. 209

<sup>3</sup> ARENDT, Hannah: *The human condition*, Chicago 1958, p. 194-195

<sup>4</sup> Bo BARDI, Lina: *Lina Bo Bardi*, Milan 1994, p. 9

<sup>5</sup> Bo BARDI, Lina: *Lina Bo Bardi*, Milan 1994, p. 9

<sup>6</sup> Bo BARDI, Lina: *Lina Bo Bardi*, Milan 1994, p. 12

<sup>7</sup> ARENDT, Hannah: *The human condition*, Chicago 1958, p. 200

<sup>8</sup> Bo BARDI, Lina: *Stones against Diamonds*, London 2017, p. 112-113

<sup>9</sup> Bo BARDI, Lina: *Stones against Diamonds*, London 2017, p. 84

<sup>10</sup> Bo BARDI, Lina: *Stones against Diamonds*, London 2017, p. 87-88



# UNITED NATIONS





## UNO-CITY

*"It is the function of the neutral state to serve as a place of encounter."*<sup>1</sup>

Prior to becoming a UN-city next to New York and Geneva, Austria and its capital Vienna had accumulated a rich history in the context of international relations. This dates back already to the year of 1955 with the signing of the *Austrian state treaty* between the Allied occupying powers and Austria that guaranteed back the sovereignty of the country - a decade after the end of the war. In full the title of treaty went as *Treaty for the re-establishment of an independent and democratic Austria*, signed in Vienna on 15 May 1955. This event was followed five months later by the declaration of permanent neutrality of Austria on 26 October 1955, which in addition forbid the country to enter any kind of military alliances or allow foreign military bases at its own grounds.<sup>2</sup> Finally, at the end of the same year on 14. December 1955 Austria joined the United Nations becoming its 57<sup>th</sup> state member.

During the years to follow the country managed to strengthen its role on international level by attracting institutions such as IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) in 1957 and UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) in 1967 to place their headquarters permanently in Vienna. Due to its permanent neutrality by constitution as well as geographic position, Vienna figured during the Cold war officially as a joint between the East and the West. As a result the city served as a stage for the summit meeting between the freshly elected american president John F. Kennedy and the soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in 1961 and later on in 1979 welcomed once again the leaders of the two superpowers - this time represented by Jimmy Carter and Leonid Breschnew. All those events which occurred in the time span of less than fifteen years were crowned in the 70s by the election of Kurt Waldheim as General secretary of the United Nations, who served prior to this as a minister of foreign affairs, and granting Vienna the status of a UN-city next to the already existing ones in New York and Geneva.

In the beginning of November 1968, the city of Vienna announced

an international competition for the construction of a centre for the United Nations. The jury for the competition was composed of four international architects - Novotny from ČSSR, Siren from Finland, Sir Spence from England and Vago from France - and three Austrian architects - Krzisch from Vienna, Schuster from Graz, Seda from Vienna. The task of the competition was to develop next to the necessary office spaces for the institutions a series of collective spaces such as library, restaurant, shops, spaces for social activities. Since it was not clear at the time how many institutions would join the IAEA and UNIDO in moving to the newly developed centre the design proposals were to be conceptualised in such a way that they could grow significantly over time. The total amount of projects submitted at the end of April 1969 numbered 283 proposals from 36 countries and the jury awarded four architects from USA, England, Germany and Austria.<sup>3</sup>

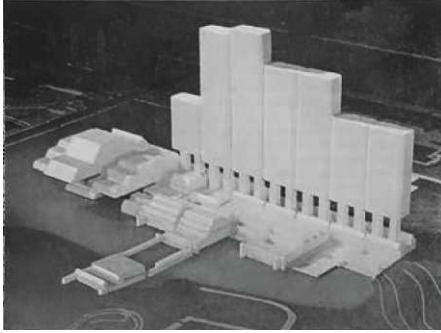
1. Prize - Cesar Pelli and associates, USA (fig. 1)
2. Prize - Grenfell Baines and associates, England (fig. 2)
3. Prize - Novotny-Mähner, BDR (fig. 3)
4. Prize - Johann Staber, Austria (fig. 4)

Yet due to the complexity of the task the winning first prize of Pelli remained a rather symbolic act and all four entries were invited to further elaborate their designs. Thus a new winning proposal crystallized, this time it was the design by Grenfell Baines and associates. Once again, similarly to the fate of Pelli the winning proposal remained unrealised and the execution contract was at the end received by the Austrian architect Johann Staber.

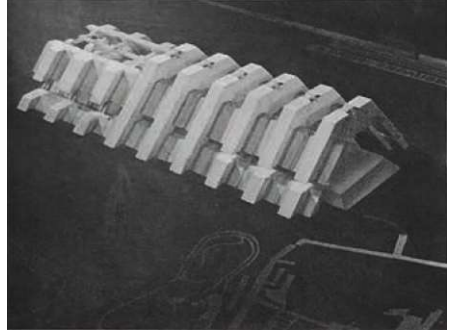
<sup>1</sup> Harry SCHLEICHER, „Wien - der dritte Sitz der UNO“ (1979), p. 125

<sup>2</sup> BGBl. Nr. 211/1955 (NR: GP VII RV 520 u. 598 AB 626 S. 80. BR: S. 109.)

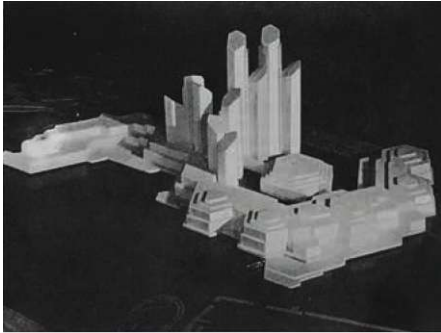
<sup>3</sup> SEDA, „Amtsitz internationaler Organisationen in Wien“ (1973), p.3



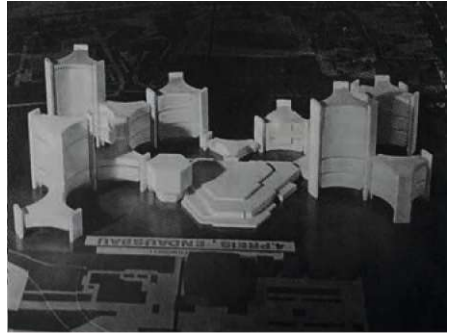
1



2



3



4

## 4 EXTRATERRITORIES

*“Oceanic islands are the radical islands, truly isolated, not only in space, but also in time. Oceanic islands have no past. Oceanic islands are immediately a “new world”, a reconstruction, a miniature, a utopia. Oceanic islands need to contain everything, because they cannot rely on anything else. Oceanic islands are “a world”, one that appeared all of a sudden. Oceanic islands are fortresses (and fortresses are always doomed to surrender). Contrary to an archipelago, which is a project of a civilization, an oceanic island is a project of a world (and a project of escape).”<sup>1</sup>*

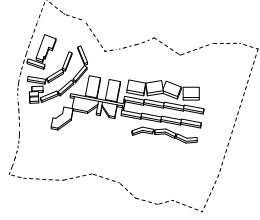
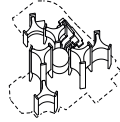
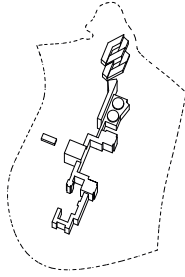
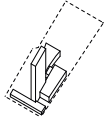
It is characteristic to all four headquarters of the United Nations that they form highly specific diplomatic extraterritories that conceptualize discussion among nations - a sort of cutouts in the fabric of the hosting city, where not the laws of the hosting country but of the UN rule. Each of its four headquarters includes next to the necessary office spaces as well as conference rooms a range of collective spaces such as library, restaurant, shops, spaces for social activities, a kindergarten, which is also the reason why nowadays people refer to the Viennese headquarter as the UNO-City.

As headquarters each island hosts various suborganizations and plays a distinct role in the UN's global mission. The office in Geneva, which used to host the League of Nations (a proto United Nations that got dissolved primarily due to its inability to prevent the WWII) is nowadays home to the office for human rights. The New York headquarter is home to the General Assembly, the Secretariat, as well as various conference where nations come to discuss global challenges. The headquarter in Vienna hosts organizations that focus on nuclear non-proliferation, peaceful uses of outer space, and the promotion of sustainable development. Nairobi, the most recent headquarter of the United Nations, is dedicated to fostering environmental sustainability and addressing global ecological challenges.

<sup>1</sup> GHIDONI, Matteo (Ed.): San Rocco #1: Islands, Venice, 2011, p.3







## MATERIAL PRODUCTION

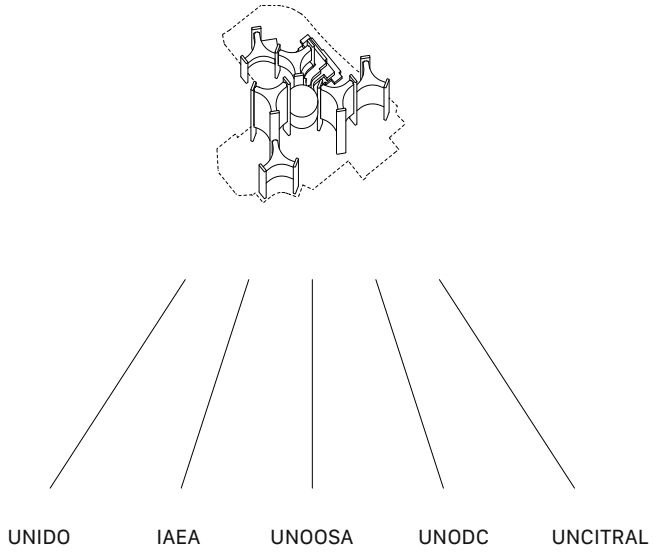
*"It is a mistake, corrects Staber, to see the UN City as an elitist place, to put everything that is called UN behind barbed wire and hermetically seal it off from the curious outside world. The result is that everyone turns away from it and develops an aversion to it. It was a good decision on the part of the tenderers, the federal government and the city, who organised the competition, that it had to be stipulated in the design that the extraterritoriality should be broken through. For example, you will walk right past the UN building from the metro station when you go into the Donaupark. Space will be created on the ground floor of the building to hold UN exhibitions for the people of Vienna."<sup>1</sup>*

In 1979, prior to the inauguration of the third centre for United Nations, the *Arbeiter Zeitung* published a short article on the architect and his expectation of the centre. With a distance of almost half a century, one is struck by prophetic opinion of those that the architect used to correct - the barbed wire did seal off the UN from the curious outside world, the planned pedestrian path through the centre was eventually not realized and the view towards the courtyard with the nations flags was obstructed in the early 90s by the visitors pavilion. The initial purpose of the visitors centre was to provide the public with insights into the work of the United Nations and its various specialized agencies headquartered in Vienna. Yet, it offers nowadays nothing more than a souvenir shop, a post office and a guided tour throughout level 0 of the towers where visitors get to see the courtyard with the nations flags, a bunch of quite bizarre Austrian paintings, a 1:200 scale model of the Viennese centre and an insight into one of the conference rooms.

A possible alternative on how to deal with the material production besides the abstract paper work of each specific agency is provided by the IAEA archive. Years ago, the interested public was confronted with 1:1 installations in order to experience the real conditions in which the UN workers operated and on particular occasions, the usual fingerfood was replaced by irradiated food such as shrimps or scallop.

<sup>1</sup> Johann STABER, „Die UNO-City - kein Ghetto“, at: Arbeiter-Zeitung 226/79, Vienna 1979, p. 4

Main agencies at the UN in Vienna





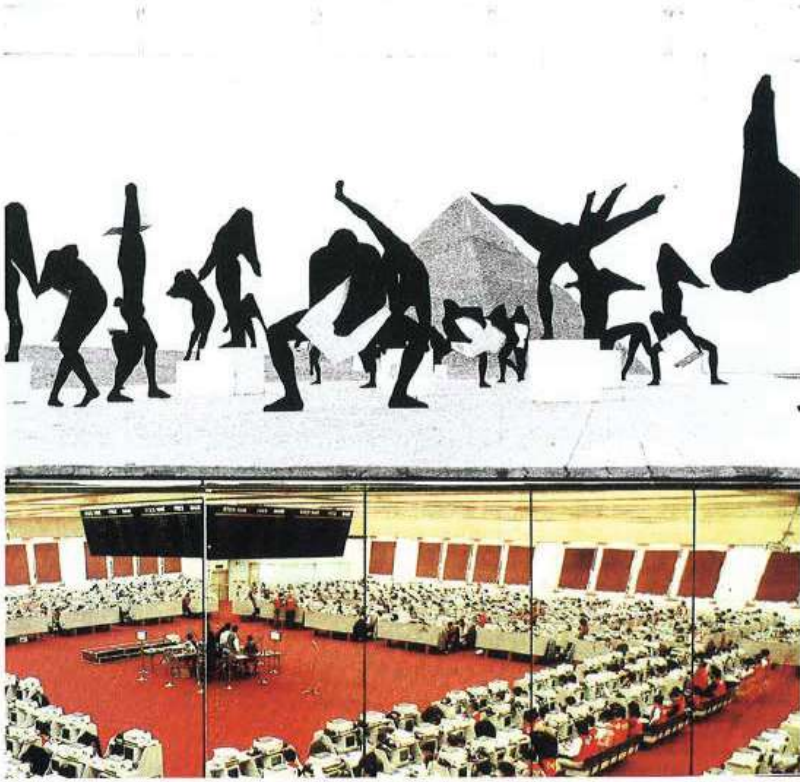


# VIC









*„Only when the city is conceived symmetrically, with a second polar centre on the other side, will the Danube area become an intermediate space. In the field of tension between two centres, its ambivalences and conflicts will be able to become productive.“<sup>1</sup>*

By 2030, the United Nations in Vienna will have already reached the first half of its 99 year rent contract for the symbolic price of 1 shilling, or 0,0064 cent, per year. So far the institution has managed to prove those wrong, who saw in it a financial black hole for the Austrian tax payers. Soon after its inauguration in 1979, the area surrounding the extraterritorial enclave saw a rapid development defined by high rise structures. What was once a dumping site became the *Donaucity*, a sector colloquially referred to as *Mini Manhattan*. Yet the promise of forming a political centre in the city of Vienna remained rather unfulfilled. The creators of the Viennese headquarters imagined the United Nations not as “an elitist place, hermetically sealed off from the curious outside by barbed wire”<sup>2</sup>. The extraterritoriality should have been broken through by a public pedestrian path starting at Kaiserwasser - an idyllic remnant of what was once a hostile territory of meandering canals - and culminating in the Donaupark, whereas the ground floors of the Y-shaped towers were intended to host exhibitions for the people of Vienna. The UNO-City was to serve as a meeting place for cultures and religions from around the world. For various reasons - from skyrocketing construction costs to confidentiality of the processed information, as well as tightening security measures - the idea remained on paper. Soon after its inauguration the UNO-City became the forbidden city.

The project explores precisely this unfulfilled dimension of the United Nations by following a different strategy. Instead of treating the United Nations as a sort of a Jurassic park by introducing voyeuristic peepholes in the form of a pedestrian path through the extraterritorial enclave or as it is nowadays private guided tours through its facilities, the work proposes to territorialize the extraterritorial institution in the city of Vienna by proposing a clearly defined platform.

The platform is situated in front of the United Nations. It redefines the current condition characterised through the unrelated fragments of Kaiserwasser, Wagramer Straße, Muhammad Assad Square and the United Nations by extending the existing square over the street. Thus delineating a surface of 12430m<sup>2</sup> lying 6m above ground which mediates between the existing fragments. Each side of the platform is characterised by a specific access corresponding to the particular context. From now on, the courtyard of the United Nations, located 3m above the platform, will be accessed via a monumental ramp. This particular element would not only stage the moment of arrival at the headquarter but also provide a clear visual relation between the two levels. The side towards Kaiserwasser is defined by green terraces which would contrast the openness of the platform by providing a place for seclusion. On the south, or the side overlooking the old city, people would access the platform via the existing metro station, whereas on the north one would walk along the rough wall of the platform to arrive at its grounds. The existing street of Gate 2 will provide the necessary means for trucks and cars to reach the top of the platform. Besides serving as an access, those elements emphasise the fundamental quality of the platform of providing a defined and yet-unbound space<sup>3</sup> above the cacophony of the contemporary city.

As an object the platform is defined by two horizontal layers - a bottom containing the treasures of the world and a top providing a stage for the scenes of public life. The top is composed of an abstract artificial field devoid of any symbolism. The purity of the surface along the field will be vandalised by the irregular pattern of superimposed elements intended to support the

various (un)foreseen scenarios that would populate its grounds over time. Those elements differ in nature - some of them are clearly pragmatic like light, electricity and water, others iconic like statues and toys, some are temporary like tents and screens, others permanent like the monumental flower pot or the U1 metro line. Altogether they redefine the top as a tool to be used by the public for activities varying in their range from informal everyday actions to reoccurring formalised events. Through its allocation above ground the top enables a gigantic stage carved out of the city fabric to emphasise the actions taking place upon it as well as the emptiness it will also host<sup>4</sup>. Fundamentally, the platform introduces an object in the city of Vienna with the sole purpose of defining a common ground for the plurality of actions, cultures and religions the city has to offer.

From the top visitors will easily reach the inside of the platform through one of the four cylinders, hosting both the necessary accesses such as elevators and stairs, as well as the load bearing structure for the metro track above. At first visitors will experience the public foyer, a huge void inside the belly of the platform framed on its both longitudinal sides by a series of rooms. In the foyer people would make their first encounters with the ornamental frenzy of the United Nations. Its size would allow for a variety of situations to occur next to each other - from noisy groups and presentations to soft spots for individuals to relax. Here visitors would orientate, gather, calm down, receive information.

In contrast to the programmatic openness of the foyer the rooms will be highly specific. The bigger rooms will host the five main agencies seated in the Viennese headquarters - IAEA, UNIDO, UNOOSA, UNODC, UNCITRAL - as well as once in a while provide the possibility for their partners in Nairobi, Geneva or New York to present their work. The bigger rooms will "confront the visitors with experiences, inevitably in the form of objects, environmental situations and moods"<sup>5</sup>. People will have the possibility to engage playfully with the material work conditions of each agency. For example, at IAEA children

would be able to operate the heavy machinery of an emergency core cooling system whilst their teachers degustate irradiated shrimps in the back. The specific condition of each room will be serviced through a thick layer of infrastructure located in the ceiling. The smaller rooms located on the opposite side would be of clearly didactic nature, hosting a library, rooms for screenings, seminars, presentations, smaller exhibitions as well as wardrobes and toilets. Thus providing the possibility to research in depth the experiences made inside the bigger rooms.

The other half of the volume is defined by a one way street along which the storage of each agency is located as well as the service cores for the technical layer supporting the level above as well below. Furthermore, it will provide a parking line for visitors buses as well as a bicycle line, which will be illuminated by daylight through the irregular pattern of skylights above. Next to this service street, yet separated by a thick load bearing wall, runs the highly trafficked Wagramer Straße - a six lane street with a width of 30m. The Wagramer Straße collects along its trajectory various monuments constituting the city of Vienna such as the Reichsbrücke, the Praterstern and ultimately culminates at the border of the old city with the Stephansdom at its horizon. Thus, by redefining the existing situation in front of the United Nations headquarter the work intends to territorialize the extraterritorial institution in the city of Vienna and so expand the collection of monuments along the street axis by one more.

<sup>1</sup> Hermann CZECH, Zur Abwechslung, Vienna 1996, p. 138

<sup>2</sup> Johann STABER, „Die UNO-City - kein Ghetto“, at: Arbeiter-Zeitung 226/79, Vienna 1979, p. 4

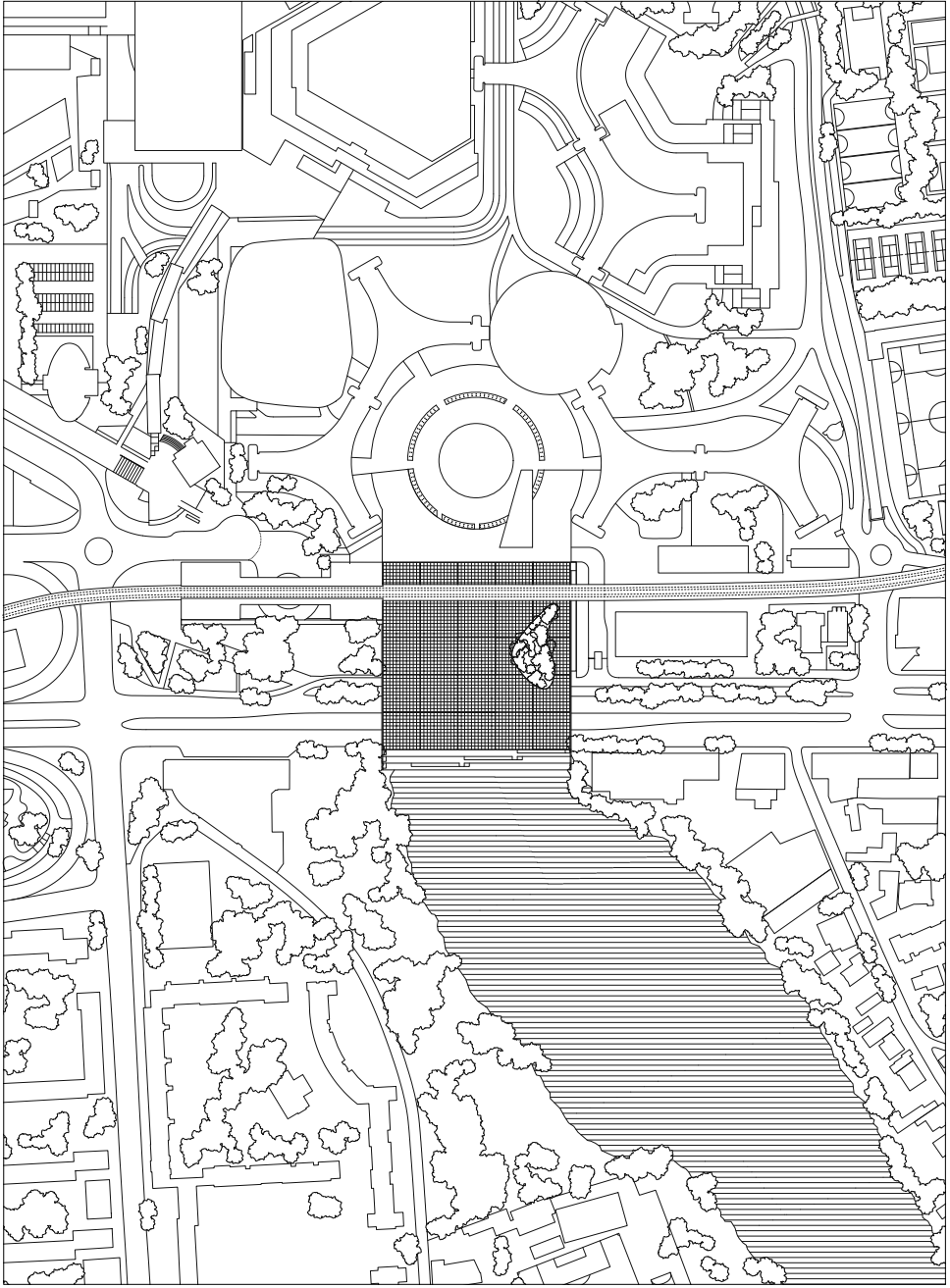
<sup>3</sup> Pier Vittorio AURELI, Martino TATTARA, Platforms. Architecture and the use of the Ground, Milan 2021, p. 5

<sup>4</sup> SENNETT, Richard, The fall of public man, London 2003, p. 16

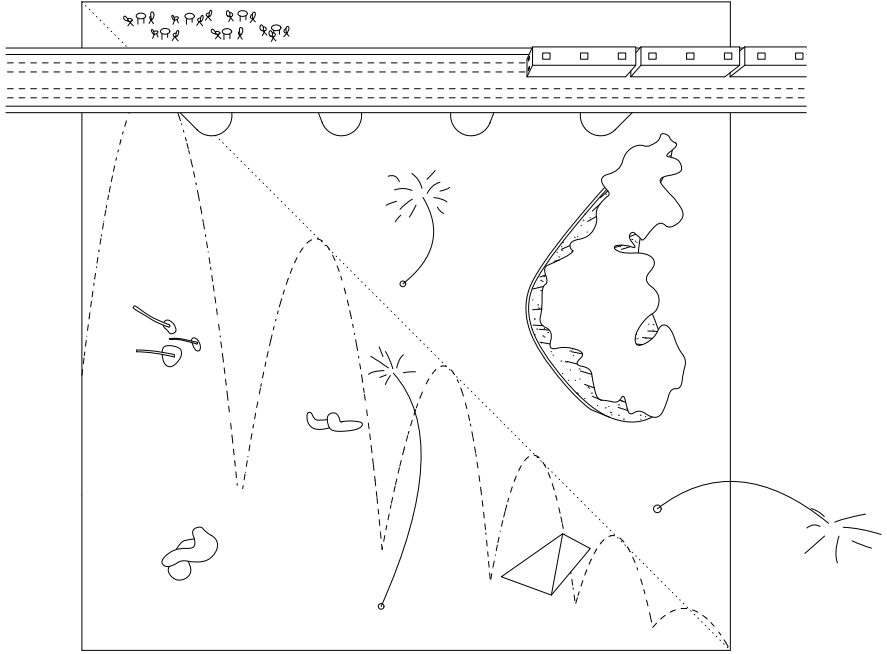
<sup>5</sup> <http://www.hollein.com/index.php/ger/Schriften/Texte/MANtransFORMS>, Accessed 17.9.2023



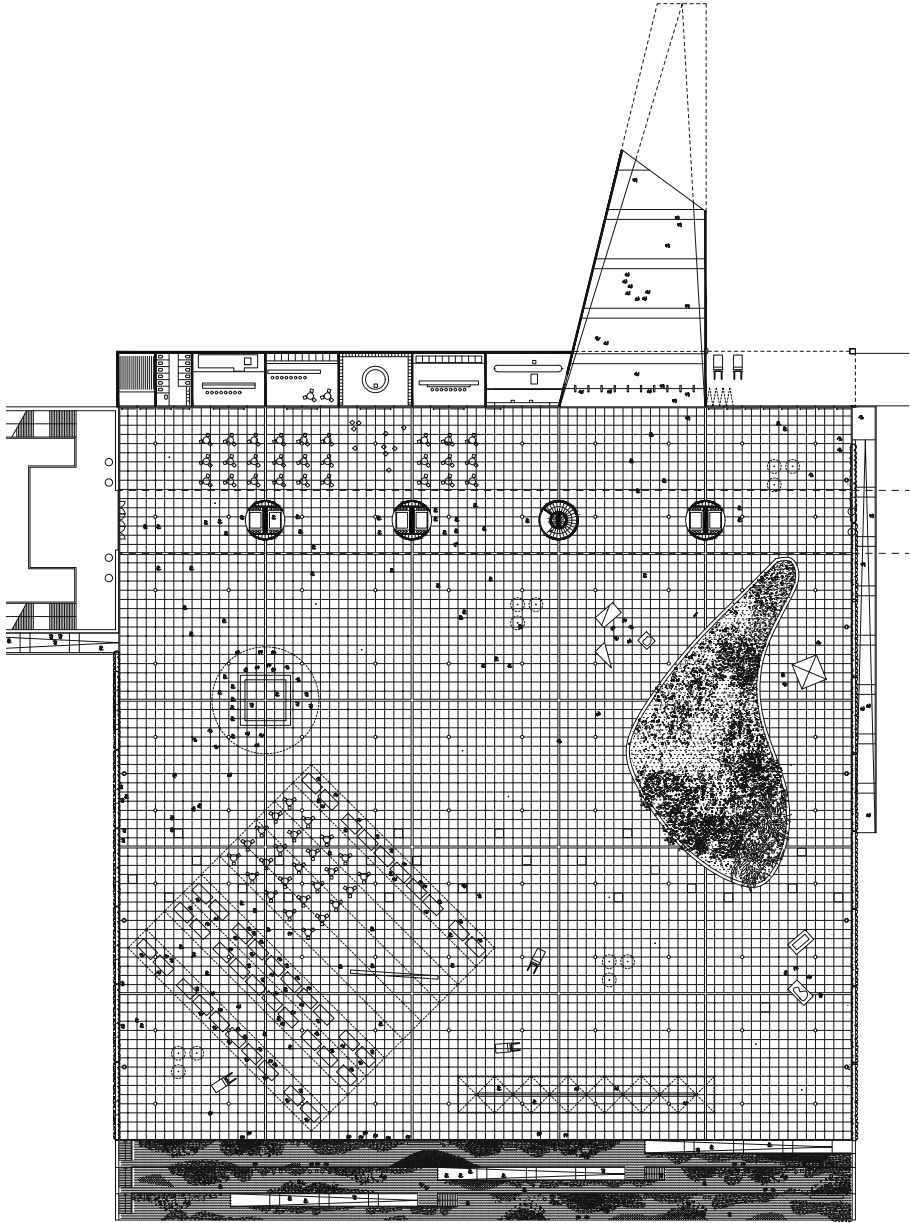




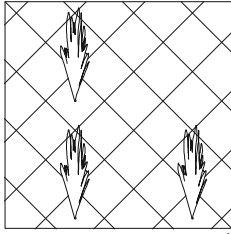




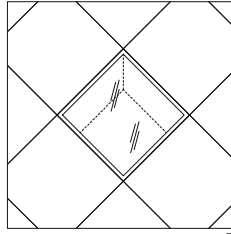




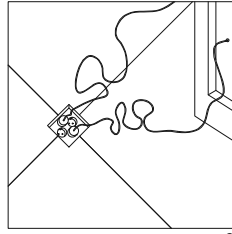




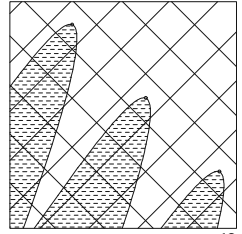
1



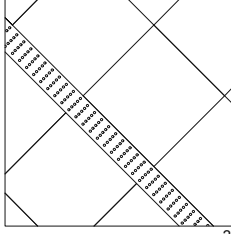
5



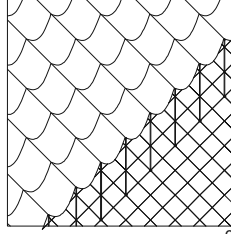
9



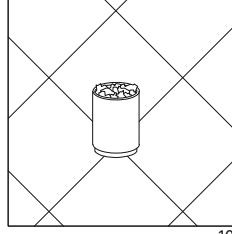
13



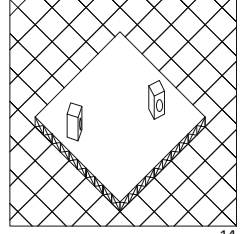
2



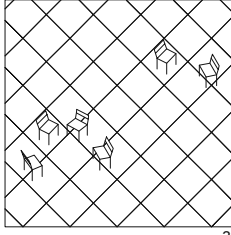
6



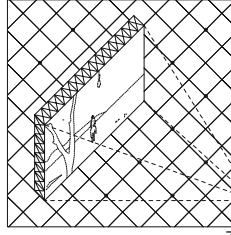
10



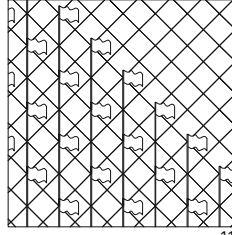
14



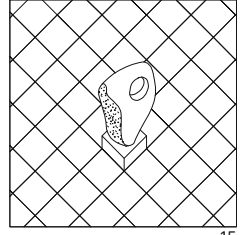
3



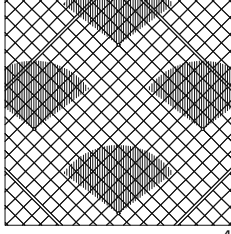
7



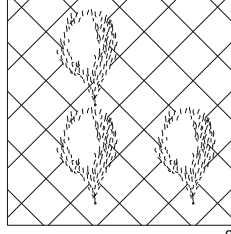
11



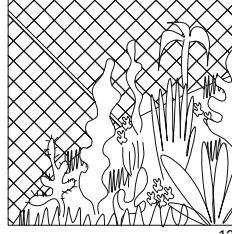
15



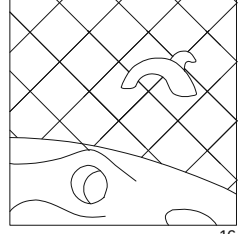
4



8



12



16

- 1. Water beam
- 2. Rain gutter
- 3. Chairs
- 4. Light

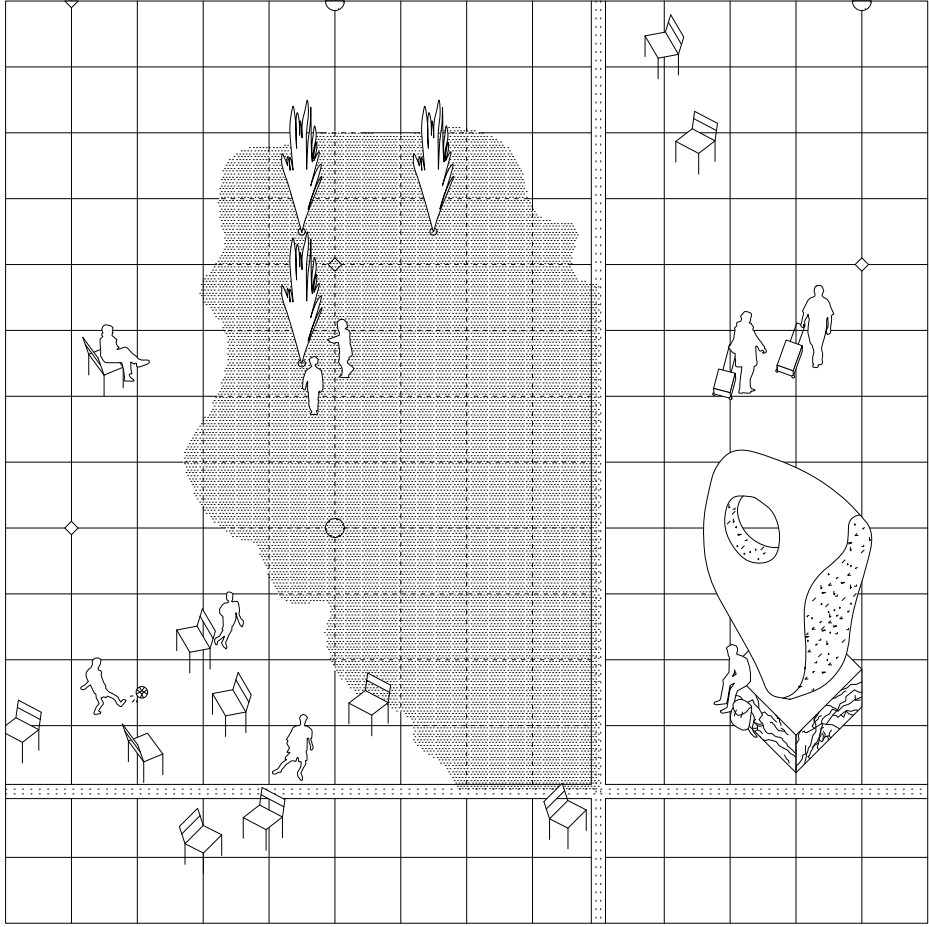
- 5. Skylight
- 6. Canopy slots
- 7. Film screening
- 8. Vaporized water

- 9. Electric slots
- 10. Trash bin
- 11. Flags
- 12. Flower pot

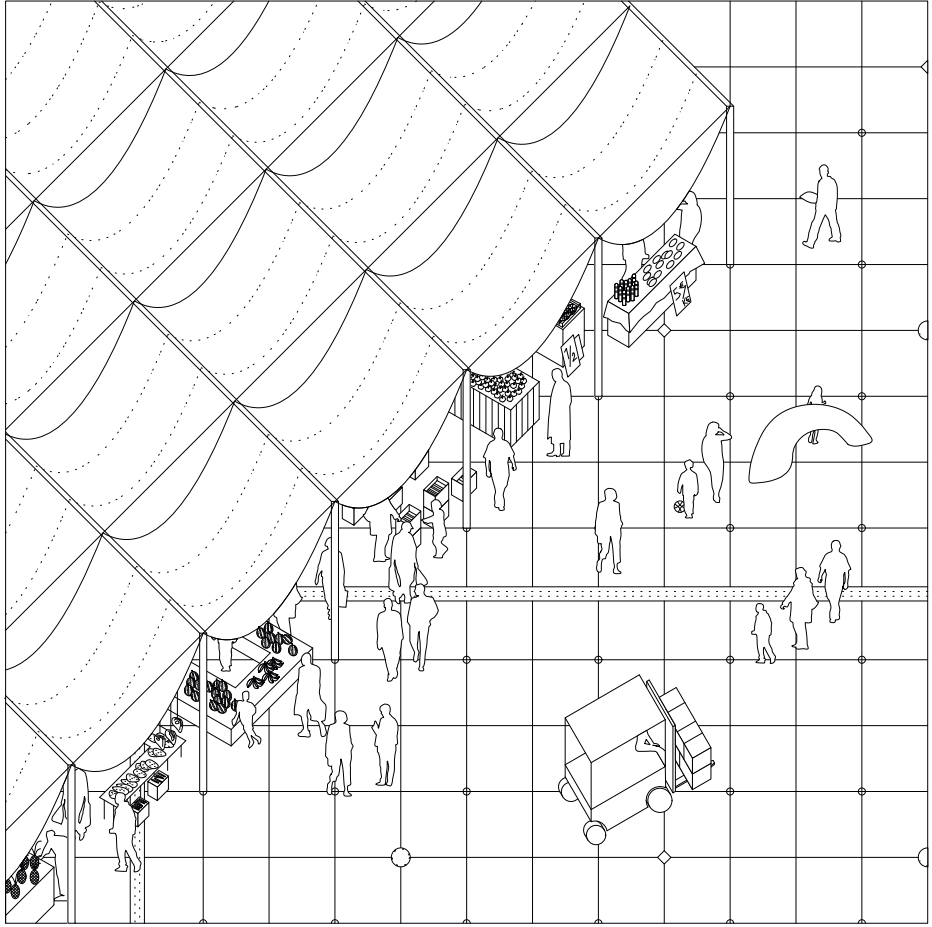
- 9. Water surface
- 10. Stage
- 11. Statue
- 12. Toys



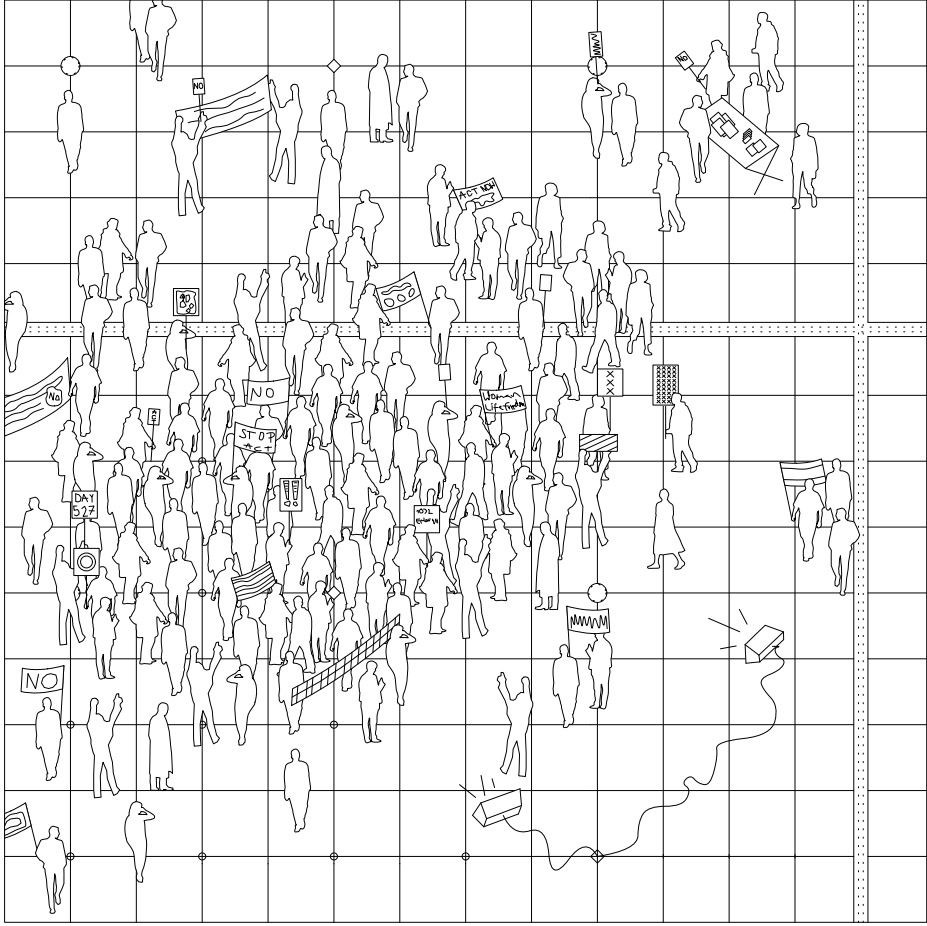




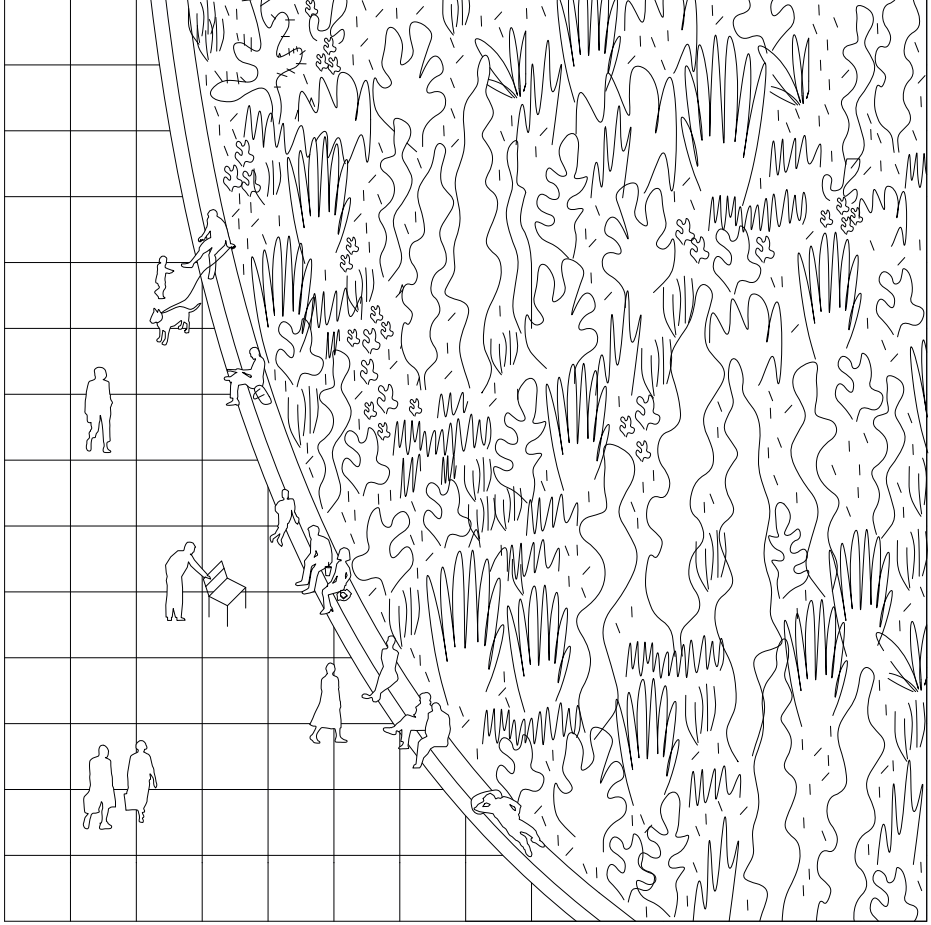






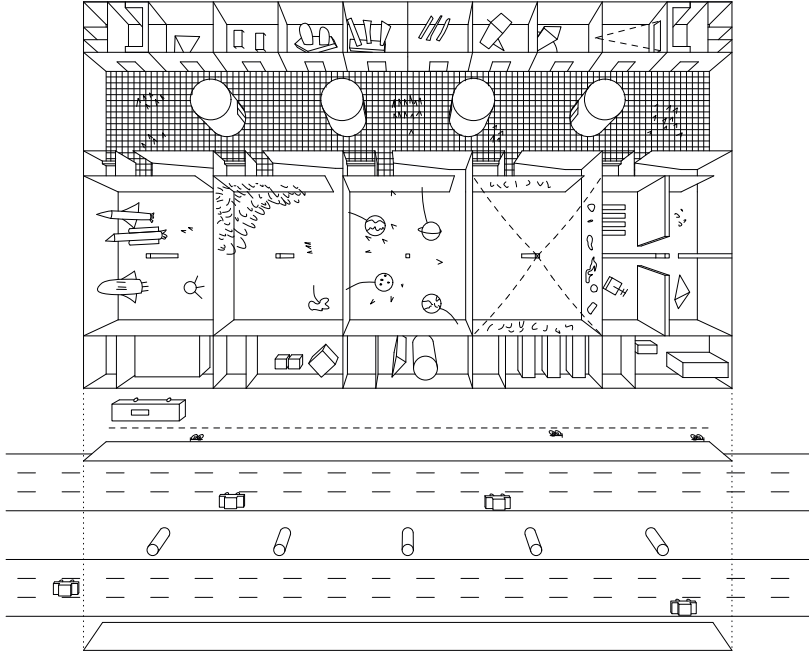




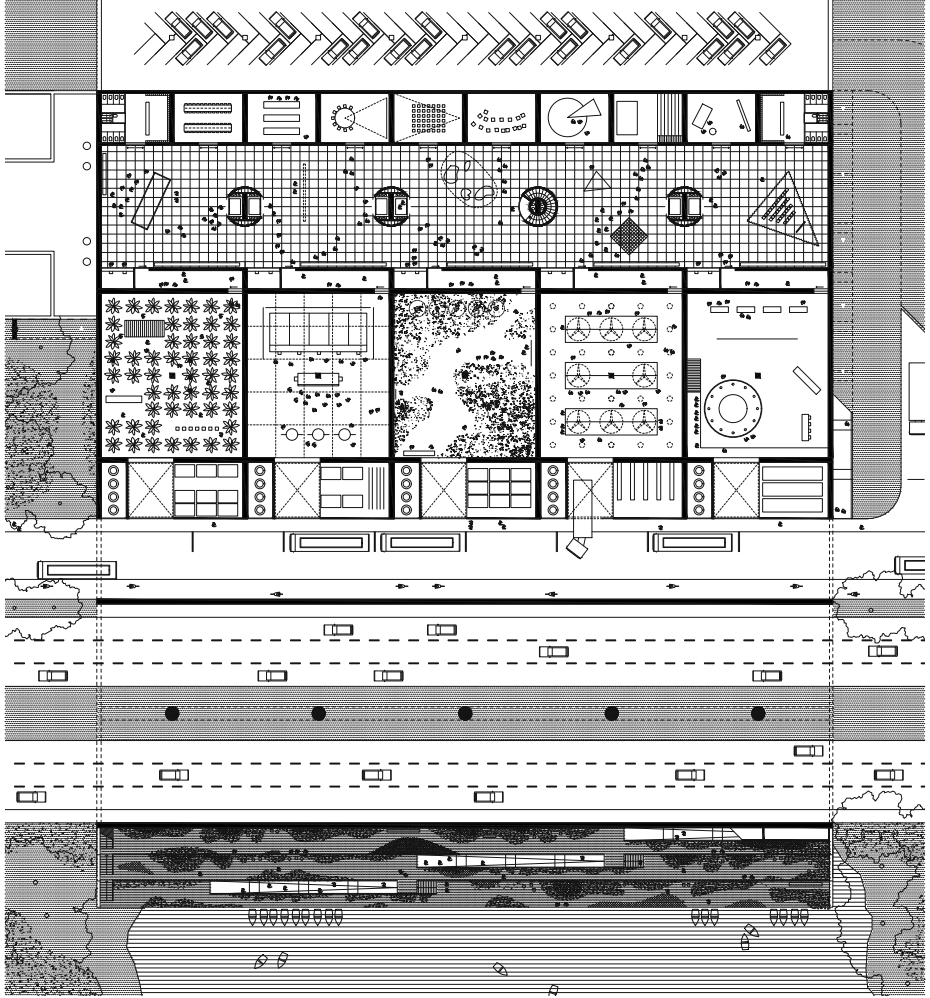




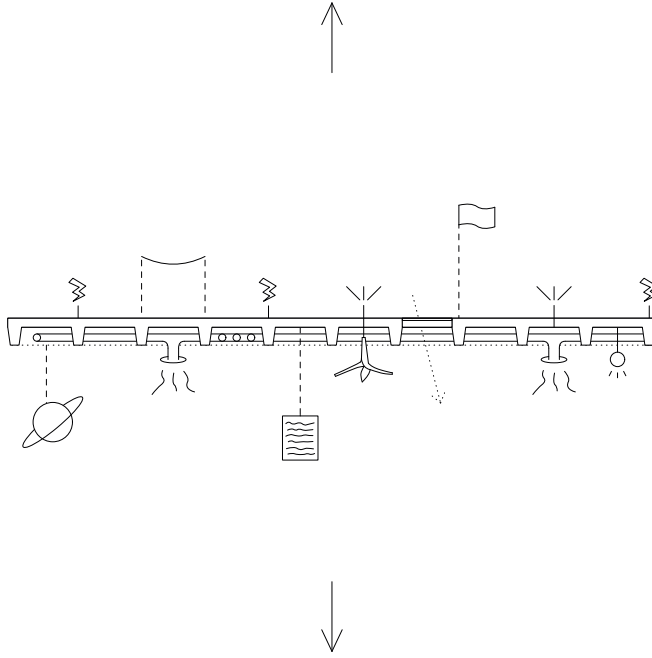




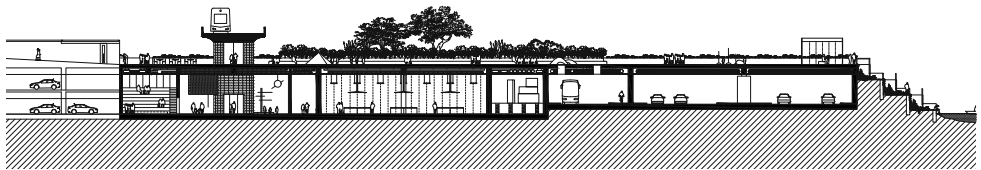






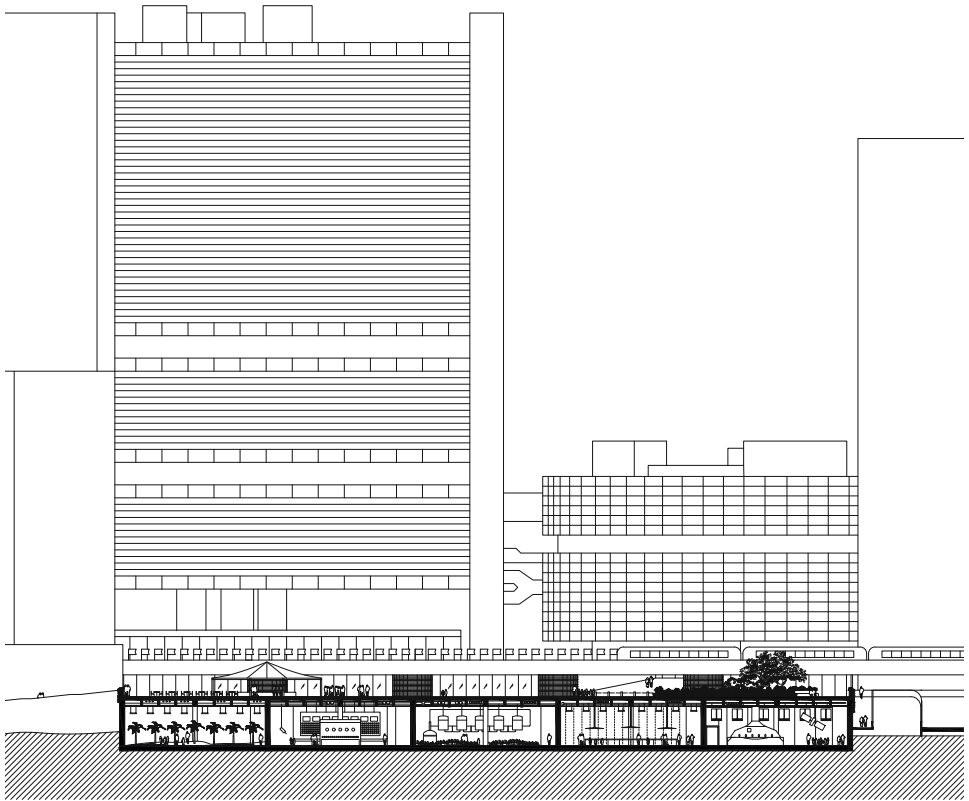




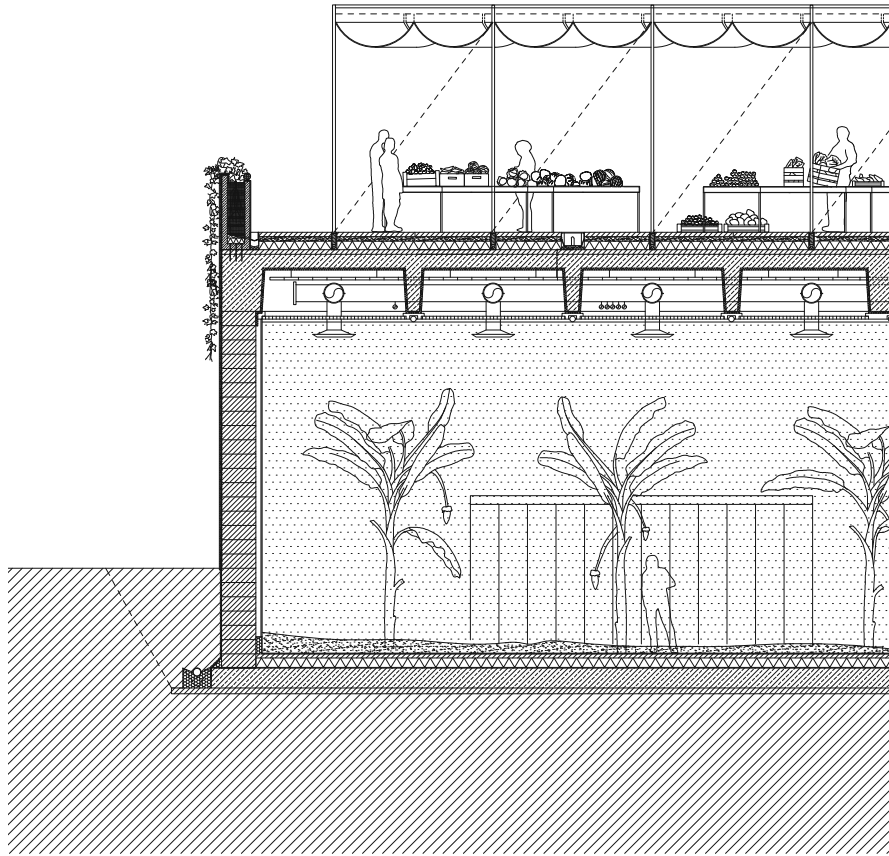




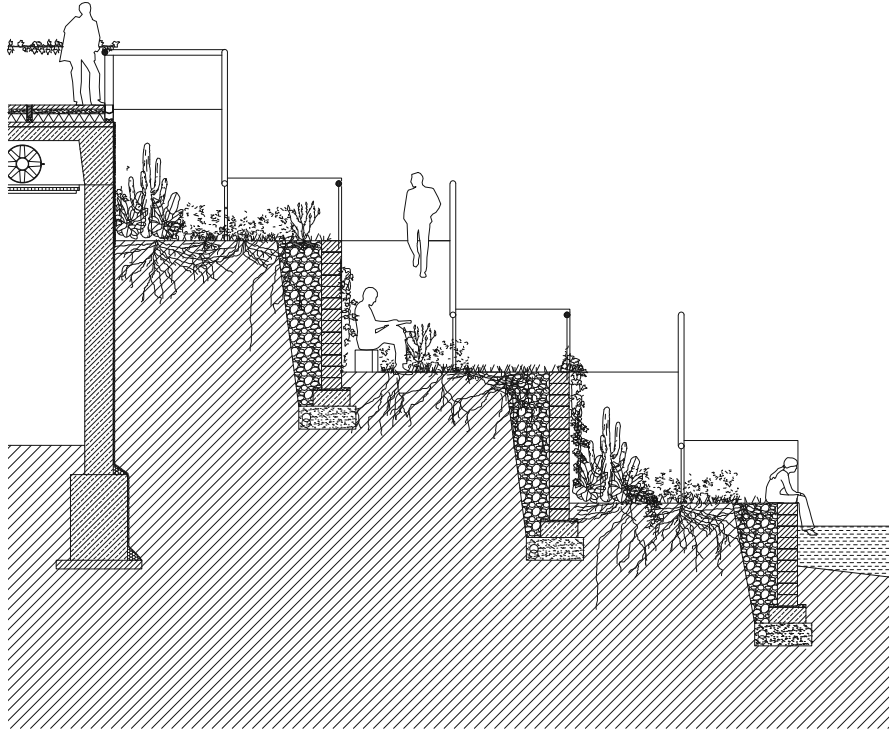




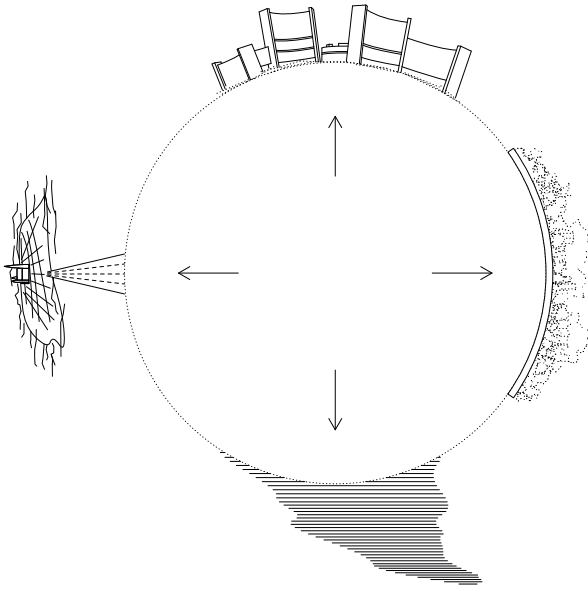










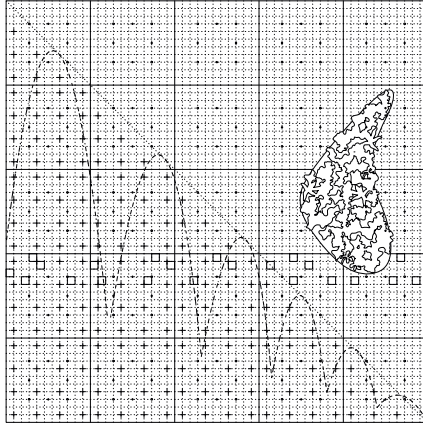








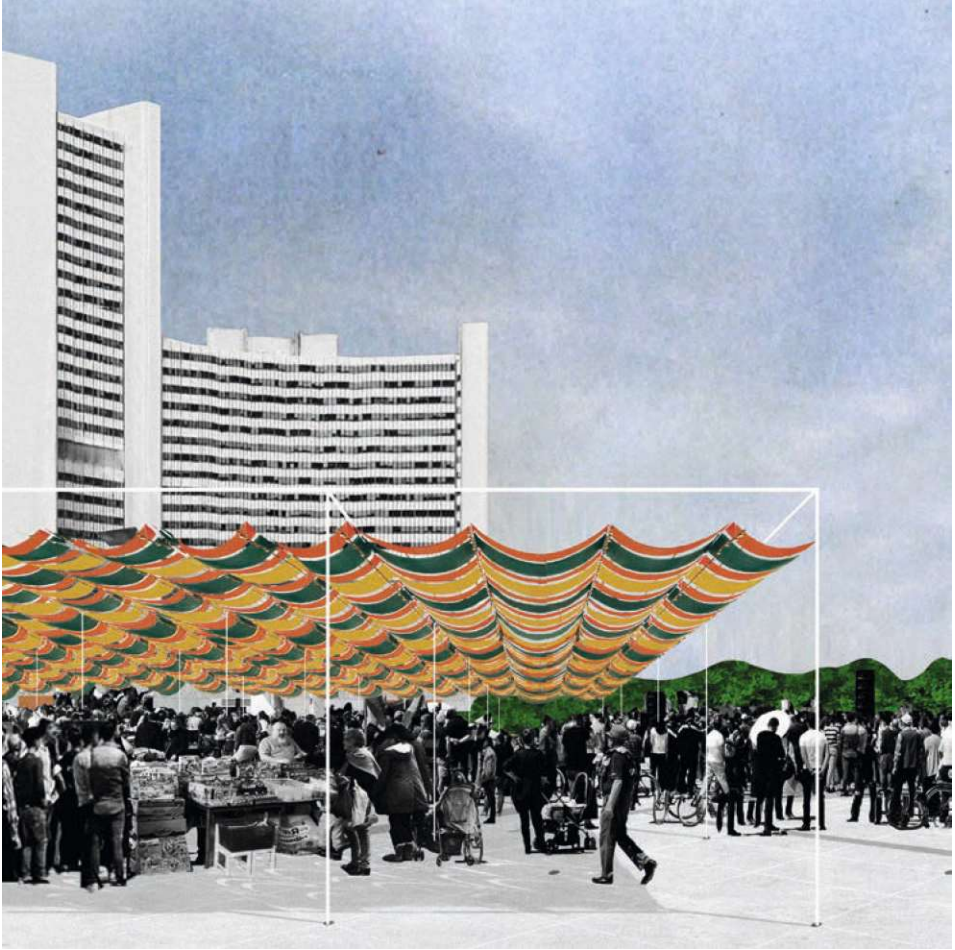
100 Scheme - surface pattern



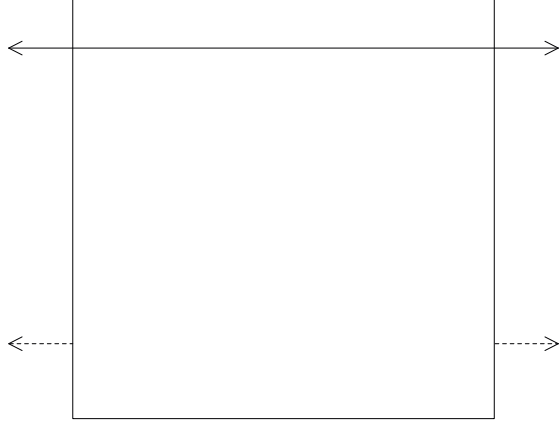


[View of the platform hosting a market](#)

Die approbierte gedruckte Originalversion dieser Diplomarbeit ist an der TU Wien Bibliothek verfügbar  
The approved original version of this thesis is available in print at TU Wien Bibliothek.





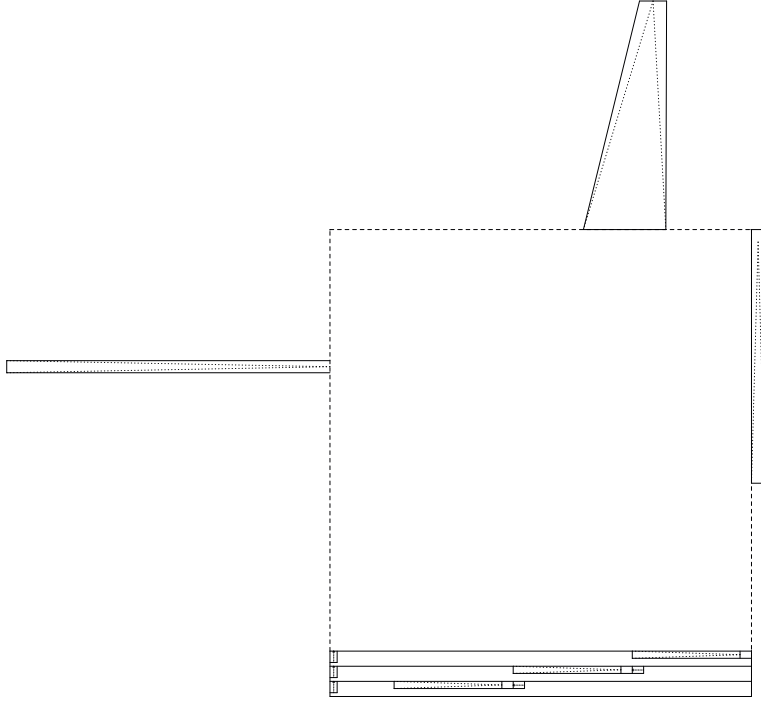


View towards Kaiserwasser

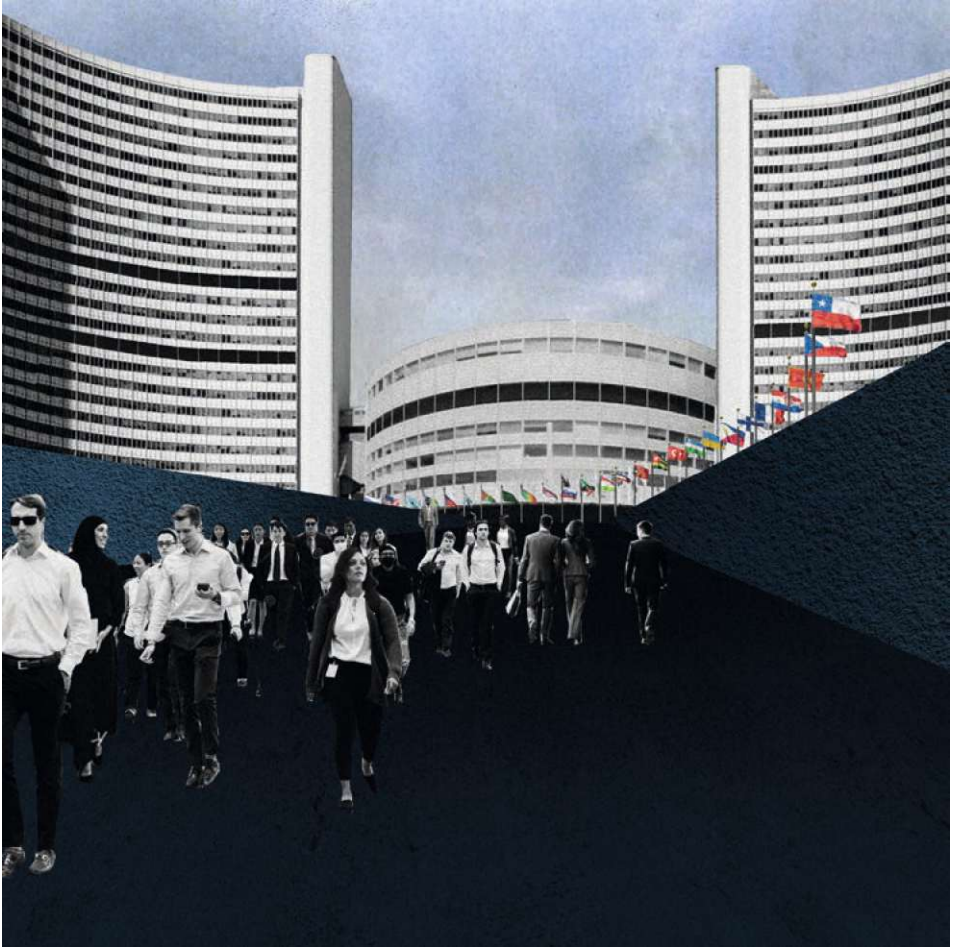




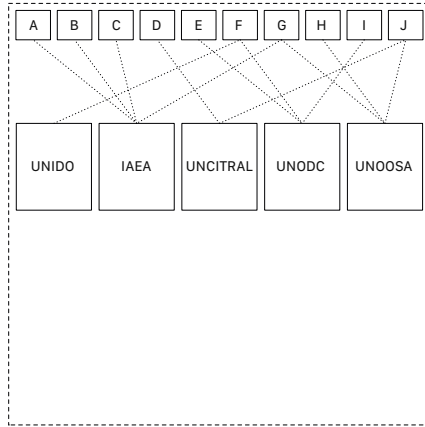




View towards the UN entrance



Scheme - gallery organisation

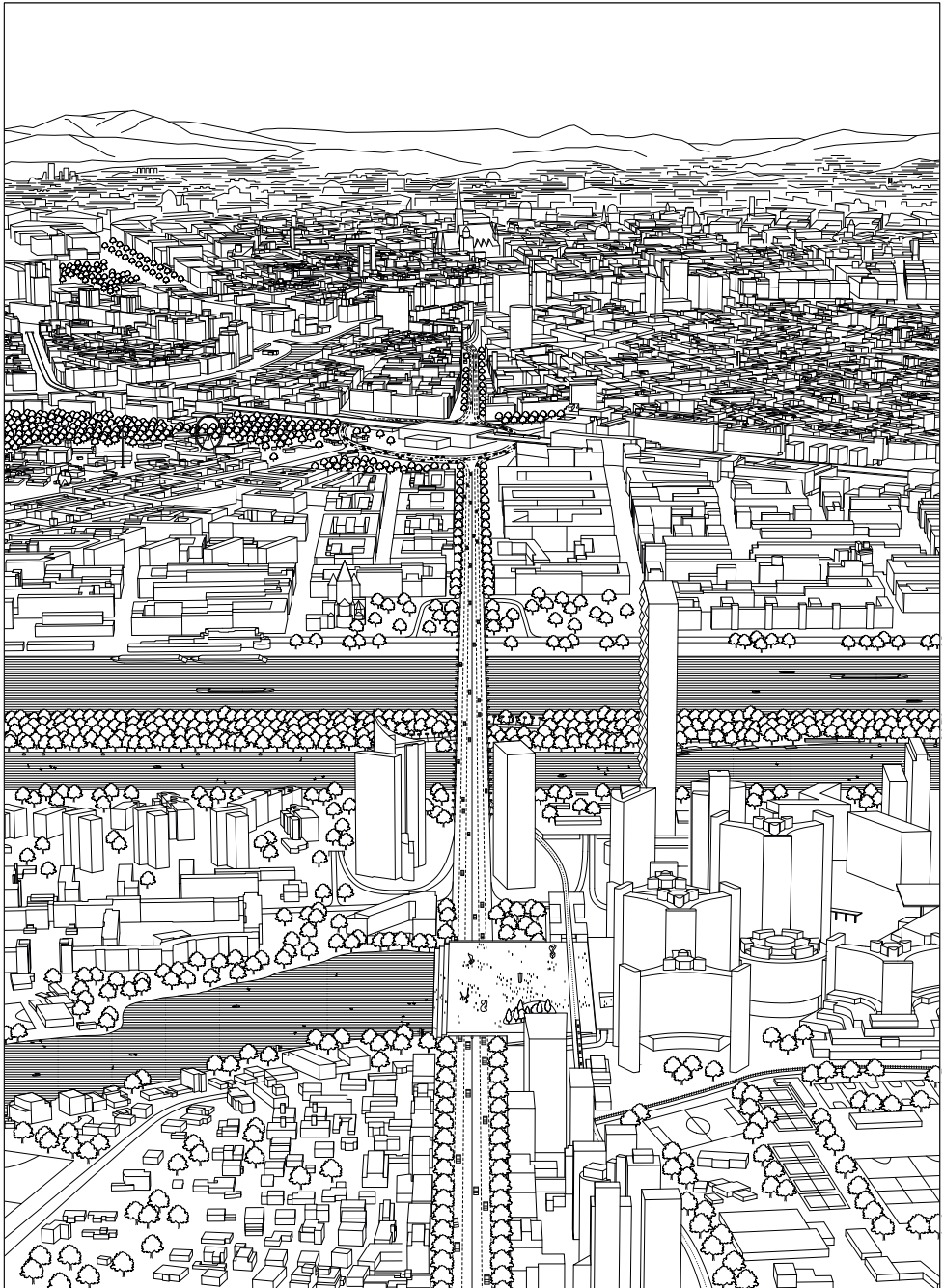


View inside the UNOOSA room









## PICTURE CREDITS

- p. 28-29: Cedric Price Fonds, CCA Archive, Montreal
- p. 36-37: <https://www.horda.org/005>, Accessed: 22.9.2023
- p. 42: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plan\\_of\\_Priene,\\_in\\_Griechische\\_Stadeanlagen\\_Wellcome\\_M0009550.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plan_of_Priene,_in_Griechische_Stadeanlagen_Wellcome_M0009550.jpg),  
Accessed: 22.7.2023
- p. 49: SEDA, Anton: *Amtsitz internationaler Organisationen in Wien*, in: Stadtbaudirektion der Stadt Wien (publ.), *Internationales Zentrum Wien - VIC*, Vienna 1973, p.4
- p. 58-59: IAEA Archive, VIC, Vienna
- p. 67: AURICOSTE, Isabelle, BLAISSE, Petra, CLARAMUNT, Marc, Yves  
*Brunier: Landscape Architect*, Basel 1996

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

ÁBALOS, Iñaki: *Absolute Beginners*, Park Books, Zürich, 2022

ARENDR, Hannah: *Viva activa oder vom tätigen Leben*, Piper, München 2002

CZECH, Hermann: *Zur Abwechslung*, Löcker, Vienna 1996

FREISITZER, Kurt, MAURER, Jakob, *Das Wiener Modell*, Wien 1995

ROSSI, Aldo, *Architecture for Museums*, Milan 2013

SCHLEICHER, Harry: *Wien - der dritte Sitz der UNO in: Vereinte Nationen: German Review on the United Nations 4/79*, Berlin 1979

SEDA, Anton: *Amtsitz internationaler Organisationen in Wien*, in: Stadtbaudirektion der Stadt Wien (publ.), *Internationales Zentrum Wien - VIC*, Vienna 1973

STABER, Johann: *UN City Wien*, Stadt Wien, Vienna 1975

SENNETT, Richard: *The fall of public man*, Penguin, London 2003

<https://socks-studio.com/2014/12/05/rem-koolhaas-and-the-bourgeois-myth-of-new-york-gabriele-mastrigli-2013/>, Accessed: 24.9.2023

<http://www.hollein.com/index.php/ger/Schriften/Texte/MANtransFORMS>, Accessed: 22.9.2023



Die approbierte gedruckte Originalversion dieser Diplomarbeit ist an der TU Wien Bibliothek verfügbar  
The approved original version of this thesis is available in print at TU Wien Bibliothek.





Die approbierte gedruckte Originalversion dieser Diplomarbeit ist an der TU Wien Bibliothek verfügbar  
The approved original version of this thesis is available in print at TU Wien Bibliothek.



Die approbierte gedruckte Originalversion dieser Diplomarbeit ist an der TU Wien Bibliothek verfügbar  
The approved original version of this thesis is available in print at TU Wien Bibliothek.