

Living and Sustainability: An Environmental Critique of Design and Building Practices, Locally and Globally

1. Paper / Proposal Title:

From the body to the city. Inhabiting properties in the post-crisis Brussels.

2. Format:

Written paper

3. Author(s) Name:

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4. University or Company Affiliation:

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5. Abstract (300 words):

In a state of crisis, the contemporary city provides the stage where a number of experiments unfold, dealing with the dismantlement of welfare state by inventing new forms of cohabitation and reciprocities. In Brussels, a demographically growing global city, suffering from socio-spatial segregation and polarisation and an unsolved social housing demand, the initiative of a Community Land Trust (CLTB) questions the resilient potential of the city. Which are the values at the core of the initiative? Which is the implied spatial paradigm? and under which conditions could existing resources be activated?

The role of property in particular will be explored, at the core of the specific initiative of the CLTB. But also as an implicit challenge of many other experiments mushrooming in Brussels in this moment often happening as part of a still very general discourse on the Commons. Property because this is the institution where the emancipation of the self, the evolution of society (Castel, Haroche 2004) and the shape of the city (Bernoulli 1943) collide and are continuously renegotiated. Property being at the core of forms of solidarity, of compatibilities and conflicts. Property hence, provides a privileged lens to observe the transformation of the contemporary city, critically questioning the sustainability of contemporary inhabiting -in the Heideggerian sense of the word- practices and patterns, as a result of the negotiations that land as a scarce resource (Polanyi 1944) should impose: between the self and society, between the body and the city.

6. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Architect and urbanist, trained at IUAV (Venice), KU Leuven and Parsons the New School for Design (New York City). As a PhD candidate in Urbanism, I am currently focusing on the transformation of welfare and wellbeing as the result of a variety of practices performed in the urban space. At KU Leuven I have the chance to grow professionally by guiding design studios at the Department of Architecture. Learning from Brussels, I am exploring the urban scene of the Capital as member and co-founder of the collective Commons Josaphat.