



Edited by Peter Lényi

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		14	hidden defects	30	venues	46	heat	62	fire exit	78	bicycle workshop	94	business cards	110	terrace garden
1	intro	17	ship	33	non-financial support of renovation	49	renovation follows competition	65	association	81	light	97	mess	113	roof garden
2	culture factories	18	circle venue	34	communication of an architectural vision	50	renovation committee	66	industrial and cultural production	82	bars	98	access	114	green roof
3	to love buildings	19	spaces with potential	35	cover first	51	main supplier	67	living museum	83	renting empty space	99	beauty	115	agri-culture
4	location	20	gas holder	36	venue reduction	52	service supply	68	tough times	84	paid by dinner	100	entrance	116	asphalt lot
5	ambitions	21	train station	37	temporary partitions	53	accessibility	69	partial-opening	85	carpenters' guild	101	bicycle stands	117	open area
6	old vs. new	22	studios in wagons	38	separating public from staff	54	the only reconstructed building	70	boxes in open space	86	anniversary party pays construction	102	two façades	118	visibility and safety
7	this is how it usually happens	23	beer crate venue	39	narrow venue	55	gate	71	museum, venue, restaurant	87	carpets from the fair	103	façade gallery	119	developing area
8	the programme follows the building	24	growth	40	industrial gallery	56	lobby	72	tools	88	rain ponchos for free	104	temporary façade	120	fences
9	time to squat	25	re-location	41	grid	57	dressing room	73	crane	89	lending	105	graffiti	121	free field
10	no grants	26	mistakes	42	mobile furniture	58	pathways	74	workshops	90	reusable cups	106	communication with graffiti community	122	art vs. creativity
11	private-public partnership	27	when it will be ready?	43	instant blackbox theatre	59	infographics	75	bakery	91	toilets	107	hole	123	end
12	protected building	28	think tank	44	flat floor	60	contact for moving tenants	76	iranian resistance library	92	directional light	108	pergola	124	credits
13	throwing out ghosts	29	flux	45	telescopic seating	61	photovoltaics	77	bookshop	93	logo	109	courtyard	125	list of participants



place

(re)construction

inside

outside

temporary

small

big

# 1 | intro

Designing the environment we live in is a never-ending process. It is based on an effort to become better, more vivacious, and to respond to how the society and social needs are developing.

In Trans Europe Halles member cultural centres, design is firmly connected to other cultural activities that take place there. It is not just about results. Its strengths consist chiefly in processes of formation and subsequent use. Architectural design (as well as urban planning) and the art/culture programmes are reciprocally formative. This is the biggest difference when compared to large public institutions.

It is not a question of facades, sculptural volumes and investment amounts. The interesting part lies in the close relationships between varied programmes, activities, employees, artists and their audience. The solutions brought about in the world of cultural centres are often unheard of in other sectors. They result from the creative clash between architects, designers, artist, managers, volunteers, students, technicians, audience and neighbours.

The book is a collection of personal experiences, observations, opinions and positions on cultural centres. It includes examples, stories, schemes, plans and diagrams. The book can be read as an encyclopaedia, guide,

manual or diary. It is dedicated to centres existing and emerging, to architects and non-architects. The research has been focused on revealing and naming architectural stories and solutions, from small and low-cost designs made in one week workshops to long-term processes, examination of the centres' needs, context and problem solving.

I started at the end of 2011. The first centre I visited was Bakelitstudio in Budapest in May, the last one Village Underground in London in December 2013.

I have tried to render what I have seen and heard, in the most authentic form possible. My aim was to act neither as an architect nor critic who would give advice. It was rather to humbly try and collect the moments I considered extraordinary, most often through their authors' testimonies. The presentation of information is restrained, even crude, free of anything superfluous. The vehicle is sometimes a picture, sometimes text. I wanted to interpret the world as I have seen it — without stylization and with a minimum of my own comments — so as not to reduce the range of possible interpretations and applications.

The result comes as 123 stories from 30 centres. Together, they form a mosaic, an information base that I — as an

architect — would like to consider as a starting point for work within the independent culture environment.

I would like to thank everyone who somehow contributed to the process of creating this book: my collaborators, consultants, respondents, the whole Trans Europe Halles network and particularly Stanica Žilina-Záriečie.

*Peter Lényi*



Peter Lényi received his degree in architecture at Slovak University of Technology. He is leading a studio 20-21 architects, based in Bratislava.

## 2 | culture factories

Since the founding of Trans Europe Halles (TEH) there has been a strong association with old factory premises. Even today the criteria for membership of TEH states that centres should 'preferably originate from a commercial or industrial heritage'. While it is understandable that young activists and artists might squat or rent these old buildings because they are abandoned or cheap, it is perhaps more difficult to comprehend what attracts them to these spaces other than necessity. Occupying dilapidated, cold and dysfunctional warehouses might seem obvious when you have no other option, but surely a comfortable, new and working building would be much more preferable, given the chance. Why make it a principle?

Perhaps the answer lies in the history of these places. Our industrial heritage is also the history of communities and, by association, the history of grassroots movements. Most of our recent ancestry is rooted in the industrial revolution, in the factories and depots, storehouses and mills of mass manufacturing and distribution. It is in and around these places that people lived out their lives, fought for and built society from: the ground up. This is where our modern cities come from, fashioned from the labour, skill, ingenuity and creativity of the working people. Here the principles of the labour movement were forged

and the ideas of equality, solidarity and international networking were advocated.

Similarly, the social and cultural lives of workers and their families revolved around these hubs of industry with the central human need for individual and communal expression and communication at their heart, forming their own neighbourhoods and adding their own amenities. For almost two centuries these neighbourhoods grew up around industrial buildings and this relationship is ingrained in the DNA of cities and citizens.

As the great manufacturing age ended in Europe in the 1960s and 70s, the buildings of the industrial age emptied. Still, these places seemed to attract new generations who had different ideas for their use. It is no accident that what might be considered the first symbolic transition from the old to new was called The Factory. This, of course, was Andy Warhol's studio founded in 1962 at 231 East 47th Street, Manhattan. If you look at the pictures from that era in NYC, you notice how the architecture reflects most concomitant arts or cultural centres that occupied old industrial buildings: brick walls, iron metalworking, surface pipes, mechanical boxes and lots of support pillars. Warhol was the son of working class parents, suggesting that, to venerate our forefathers, we seek

integrity and even nobility in honest labor.

Throughout Europe from the 1960s onwards, the idea that culture was not just reserved for ruling classes and that everyone had an equal right to a cultural voice was vigorously pursued by a new youth movement. This meant finding places to make the idea manifest, as the establishment was not about to allow 'revolutionaries' into their palaces of culture. The abandoned industrial sites were called back into service, as factories of a different kind: culture factories. New forms of music, dance, performance, visual art and, in fact, any innovation that signified change and freedom, filled these former halls of industry. From counterculturalism to punk, communes to eco-collectives, neighbourhood centres to anarchist squats, this rehabilitation of our industrial heritage continues. With the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, a whole new landscape with respect to these old buildings opened up, with many now undergoing similar transformations to their Western counterparts.

Trans Europe Halles has recognised and embraced this trend from its founding; its original members themselves were housed in abandoned covered markets, old factories, and the like. The pioneers of new cultural movements also protected these former industrial sites and advocated for their preservation. This heritage represents the people

who built our society. They don't have monuments to their memory, but these structures, where they built our prosperity and possibility for future generations represent their spirit. There is an allure to these buildings, sometimes a simple and beautiful form like the former creamery now occupied by Mejeriet in Lund, Sweden, or the cathedral-like vastness of Kaapelitehdas (Cable Factory) where they once made the transatlantic communication cables for Nokia, that represents a different kind of history, the unspoken people's history, survived by new generations who continue the struggle for a non-hierarchical culture.

All across Europe you can find these cultural and art centres and these buildings. Go and discover them.

*Sandy Fitzgerald*



## 3 | to love buildings

*The relationship of the people with the place where they work is always felt from the outside also.*

"We were using these buildings before the renovation. We loved them as they were: slightly desolated but with a very special, post-industrial touch to it. There were festivals organised here, theatre and dance performances, film screenings, workshops, conferences and many more. Buildings needed renovation though, because at some point they would have fallen apart.

Before heavy equipment appeared we organised a 'goodbye party' inviting all our friends, partners, audience. It was a very tearful moment. We were walking around, touching bricks, happy that 'new' is coming at the same time hoping that the 'old' is still going to be visible. And as you can see we've succeeded! Renovation was done with a great attention to details."

*Agata Etmanowicz*



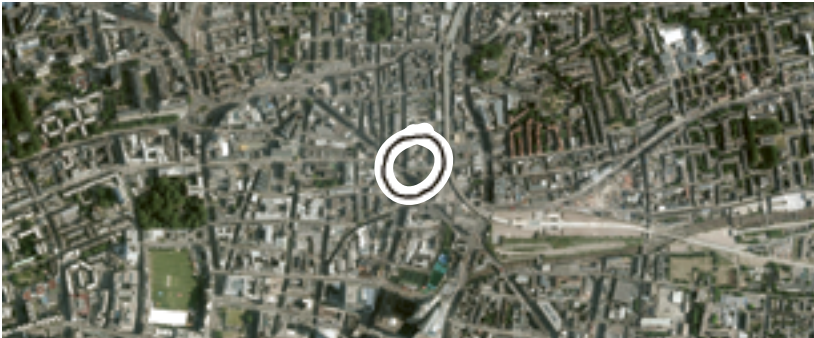


## 4 | location

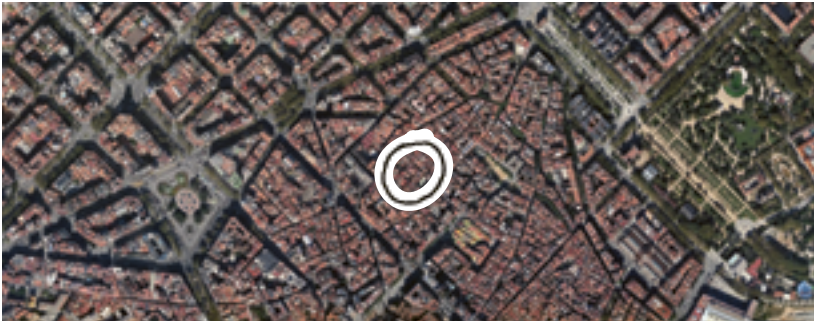
*Is the culture centre in city or in the countryside?*

*Is it in the centre or in the suburbs?*

*Is it a standalone building or a part of a complex?*



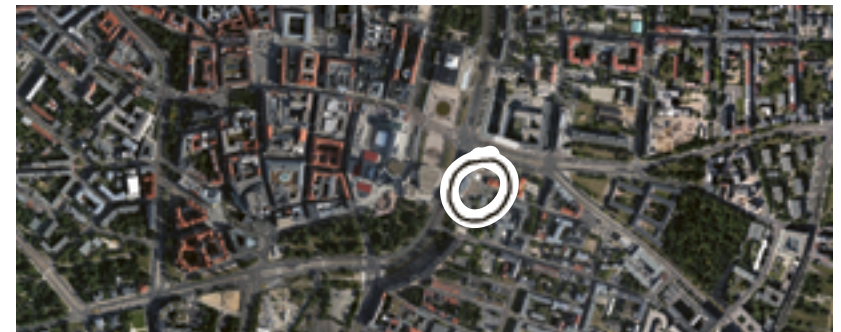
**Village Underground**, London, 15 000 000 inhabitants (metropolitan area)



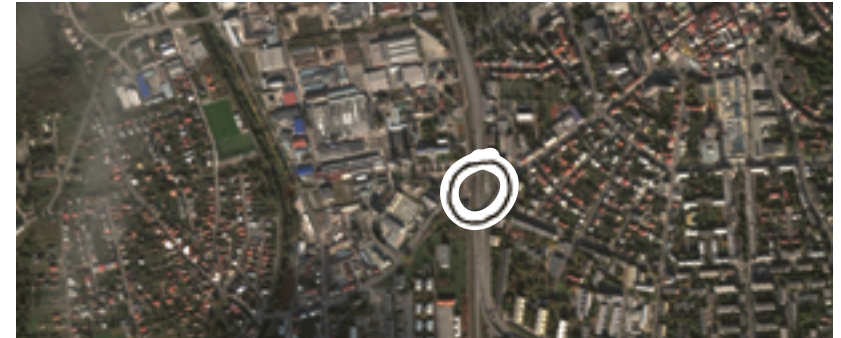
**Antic Teatre**, Barcelona, 5 300 000 inhabitants (metropolitan area)



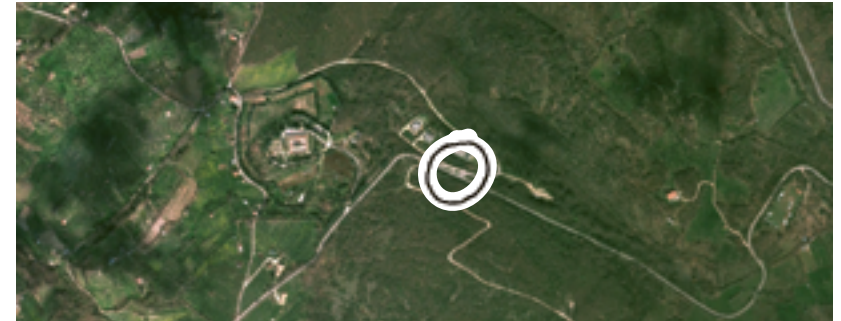
**Röda Sten konsthall**, Göteborg, 522 000 inhabitants



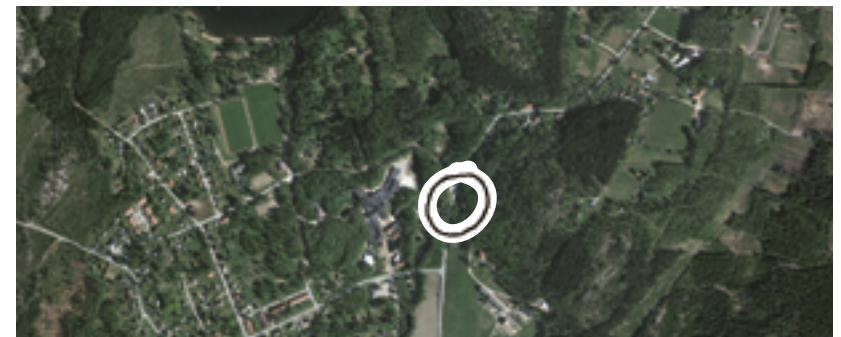
**Moritzbastei**, Leipzig, 521 000 inhabitants



**Stanica Žilina-Záriečie**, Žilina, 82 000 inhabitants



**OZU**, Monteleone Sabino, 1257 inhabitants



**Not Quite**, Fengersfors, 345 inhabitants



## 5 | ambitions

*It is nearly impossible to imagine that it could work, which is why it is suitable as the greatest ambition.*

Lemmit Kaplinski is showing us a huge run down estate. We're walking through many buildings, the last one seems to present the biggest challenge.

It is furthest from the entrance to the estate, the largest, the most damaged, it and would need the biggest investment. It's inspiring due to its ability to devour all the time and money one is willing to dedicate to it, to see it shine.



## 6 | old vs. new





## 7 | this is how it usually happens

"People come together because they are friends. They have common goals, common interests, therefore they start to do bigger projects and finally they need an organisation.

Our organisation was not an exception; it was created by friends who were supporting creative work. When I was an active visual artist, my friends were poets, writers, filmmakers and art critics. Common ground was of course wine drinking, partying together, book presentations, opening exhibitions. Then after parties, discussions about what's important in art, what we need to support, what more we need to create an space for creative people.

Step by step we started an organisation in my art studio. Then it turned into an exhibition space. Later, it turned into a public space for various art events, not only for visual arts. We found out that we had visitors and friends coming to our events and they were more than one hundred and no longer fit in a small room, which is now our office space. Then we found out that it was really necessary to create a bigger space to hold all these projects."

*Dzintars Zilgalvis*



## 8 | the programme follows the building

*A limitation on one hand, unique characteristic on the other.*

"It's a really big building — 1400 square metres, but the space is divided into a lot of small rooms. We would like to have more people in one room. Overall we can host about 1200 people, but not in one room.

It's quite unique — we can have different events. In one room we can have theatre, in the second music, in the third reading. It's an advantage on one hand, and on the other it's difficult, because we are limited, we can do concerts for 300 people maximum.

We do events that use the whole building. You can walk around in a circle and in one night you can dance to radio music or hard rock or techno; it's like a small festival. If you are in the electronic room, you can't hear anything from the heavy metal floor. It's completely separated, but you can easily walk to the next floor and see it. Walls are made of stone, three metres wide.

We are not able to change the main construction to widen things. Our challenge is to use the space we have in an intelligent way and to structure our programme so that it fits the building.

You cannot change the building for the programme; you have to change the programme for the building."

*Torsten Reitler*

## 9 | time to squat

*The trigger was the feeling of one's right for space being endangered.*

"In the beginning there was a network formed of different kinds of organisations, mainly from culture, and artists: musicians, painters, who tried to ensure, that there will be some production places in the city. They intended to make Pekarna such a cultural centre. This was in '92.

An architecture studio made a draft plan which was enough to start the process of the renovation. But it got stuck because at that time the political change was very shaky and the main focus was on building bridges, something that was politically more important.

In '94 we noticed that somebody was in the complex — in very expensive cars — measuring the whole place. Somebody saw this and warned us. This was the main reason why [we wanted] to squat [in] it. We wanted to protect it, make sure that it would keep the purpose it was meant for."

Borut Wenzel



## 10 | no grants

“Fabrika pays and produces cultural content by itself. We don't have any funding nor sponsors. Our factory is an umbrella center — we have tenants, we deliver spaces for them, and they pay the rent. This rent is low, so it is a kind of discount for creative industries. This money is more or less enough to pay salaries, to pay taxes, to renovate our buildings and to arrange and produce exhibitions. So we are completely independent and we do not use any financial support.

It is easier for me to make some decisions about money and to do something to earn this money myself rather than to fill in thousands of application forms asking somebody to give me money. I really believe that if I spend 10 hours doing something by myself to earn the money and if I spend 10 hours filling in the forms to get the grants, I would much prefer the first way. This is a sacred principle of punks in Europe — Do it yourself — DIY. I know that I would have to fill in thousands of forms to get the grant and then write up thousand of reports about how I spent the money, so for me that would be quite a problem.”

*Asya Filippova*



# 11 **private-public partnership**

*Forms of self-governance adapted from the non-cultural sector offer new possibilities for funding.*

"We are based on a private-public partnership. Fabryka was created on the basis of agreement between two NGOs (Chorea Theatre and Łódź Art Centre) and the city of Łódź. We are registered as a municipal organisation.

Financing for establishing Art\_Inkubator came from EU structural funds. What might be interesting is that grant didn't come from the strand dedicated to culture, heritage nor tourism but from the one aiming at strengthening entrepreneurship. Match funding was granted by the City of Łódź. Fabryka had to re-think, re-organise and develop new functions to become a business. That's quite unique. And it wasn't easy. The process required convincing officials to invest a little trust (and lot of money!) in a new model. In practice that meant changing attitudes towards the creative sector: from "grant-takers" to producing economic and social value. It was difficult, but as you can see, possible."

*Agata Etmanowicz*

## 12 **protected building**

*Besides some advantages, the status of a historical monument brings along with it a lot of obligations.*

Moritzbastei is a medieval fortress — the last remaining part of the old city wall in Leipzig, built in 1551-1553. It has served as a cultural centre since 1982.

For 150 years, the building was used only as the foundation for a school, which was standing on it.

“Moritzbastei was filled with earth, it was not used as a building, nobody knew what to do with it. It was rebuilt in the 70's and they started to renovate it — literally — to dig it out of the ground.

We have to deal with restrictions — we have a concert hall with a really bad acoustics, like a cave from the 16th century. It was a room for the soldiers. It's quite hard to get a good sound. We want to improve it — but if we take a textile structure or something to have a better sound, we would hide the original architecture, and so it's not possible. It's a challenge for us, we try to experiment with temporary things like textile and wood to improve the sound.”

*Torsten Reitler*

## 13 | throwing out ghosts

*If a place has historically become a symbol of something negative, it is necessary to take a stand, say it aloud and start again.*

"UFA was the most important film company in Germany before, during and also after WW2. Nazi propaganda was produced here in this factory. When we found out, we were wondering, what do we do with this heritage?"

There was a tendency in West-Berlin and many other places to destroy all buildings that remind people of the history they don't want to be reminded of anymore.

Through squatting we preserved these buildings. We discussed for a while and then we decided to go on: We celebrated a ceremony like a healing process and threw the old UFA ghosts out and invited new spirits. We are the second life of the UFA-buildings and we fill them with new ideas and creativity.

Since that time it's been okay for us and we went to produce other forms of art here."

*Sigrid Niemer*



## 14 | hidden defects

*Even the use of an almost new building might involve hidden defects, left behind by the previous user.*

"This place was built in the 80's. It was supposed to be a typography workshop. It was open for six months and then they closed because it was too isolated. The streets were too narrow for the truck to bring paper.

Then it was a candy factory for four years. They were supposed to produce candies here, but they were only packing them. Sometimes they were also packing candies that were too old to be sold. This place belongs to the local community. They managed to get rid of them but the place was filled with all the stuff. Tons of old candies everywhere... 18 tons' worth. It took two years to fix and empty the space.

We had to dig all around the building to find the foundations, and we discovered that the foundations were not made the way it had been described in the project. While doing the structural work we discovered a lot of things that had been done like this. For example, windows which do not close.

There was also supposed to be a kitchen in the factory. There were pipes for the water coming out. We said — perfect, we can put a sink here. Then we did all the work and discovered that the pipe

to carry water away was fake! It was closed. This was only the beginning of it, and then there was a wall.

Why should people build a factory here, in the middle of nowhere? Without foundations? The answer is there was some public money to build industrial areas in the mountains, probably for financing new activities. They decided to build this, they stole money from the building, and this is the result."

*Paola Simoni*





# 15 | warehouse

*A warehouse = lots of space.*

High ceilings, good access from two streets with surrounding space suitable for setting up a lobby, toilets, bar and a storage room.

Hard surfaces with high acoustic reverberance and a roof with bad technical features are adaptable.

Ideal ground for a venue.



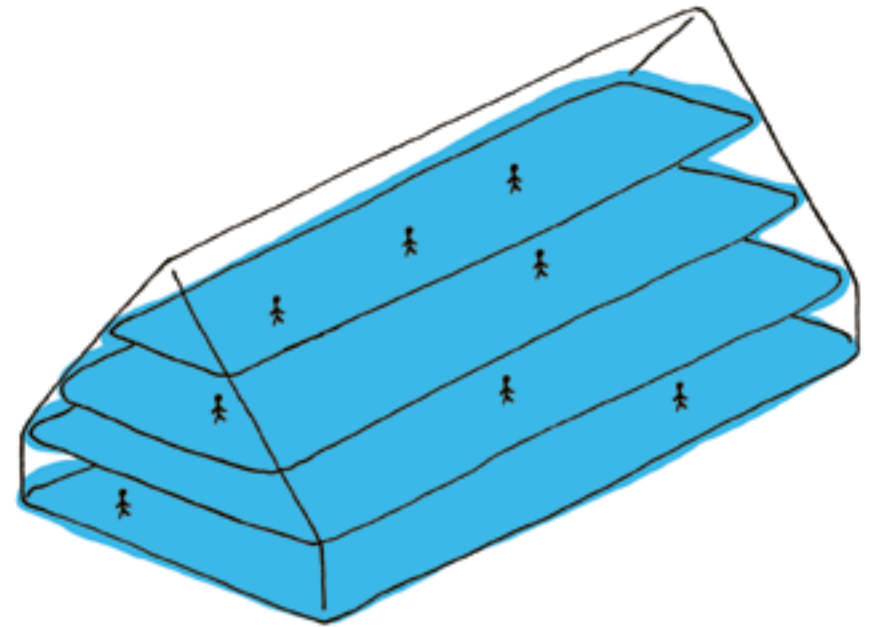
## 16 | loft

*Every disadvantage of a space which makes it more difficult to use compared to others decreases interest and, as a result, also its market value. That's when it starts to be interesting for us.*

Bakelit MAC is located in the centre of a big fenced complex with a working reception, neighbouring workshops, shops with building material.

In 1999 Márton Bauer, the owner of Bakelit MAC, paid for 1600 square metres of loft space in a factory. Today it's 2200. Wherever possible (construction and programme-wise), people from Bakelit MAC divided the high space into multiple levels. They built a new floor 3 metres high and multiplied the working space. Even today there remains space where this is possible. The ceiling above the kitchen, where catering is prepared, is unnecessarily high. It will soon be knocked down and built again, a bit lower. This will make the space above it high enough for an office.

At the time of purchase, the loft was cheaper than the ground floor due to complicated access. The access problem for people, equipment, beer barrels, sofas and wheelchairs was solved with a giant lift at the main entrance.



## 17 | ship

*Rent on the river bank is expensive and usually the best in town. The idea of creating a cultural centre on a ship looks like a very effective one.*

It has a clear competitive advantage over the others — they are all on land, you are on a ship. A ship is a strong symbol. Even when it's firmly anchored, it has an air of exploration and adventure; when there are waves, the floor rocks a bit the atmosphere is that of bravery and newness.

A38 is what the ship is called today. A stands for Artemovsk, the name of the ship prototype, and 38 is its serial number. The Ukrainian ship originally served as a stone carrier. In place of the former main cargo space is now a concert hall, where rock is played.

It took the architects three years to design the ship. It was repaired in the dockyards in Komárno; in Budapest the interior was built and the technical equipment installed, which they managed to do in only three months. The opening was on 30 April 2003. The initial investment of 3 million Euros was earned back in 6 to 7 years. That enabled the owners to build a second ship, this time a brand new one, which is anchored beside the original one. The location of the ship was chosen very pragmatically. It's not about the views, sights, or a Bohemian part of

town. Proximity to the city centre, which is UNESCO-protected and bordered by Petőfi Bridge, is a priority. The ship is anchored only 135 metres from the bridge.

Thanks to a good project, enough funding, and enthusiasm, it has been possible to fit 5 fully-fledged bars, 2 roof terraces, and a concert hall (house in house system) with a 700-person capacity on board. The ship has excellent acoustics, a restaurant, gallery, recording studio and offices.





## 18 | circle venue

*A circular floor plan, with an evenly distributed technical structure, enables a versatile configuration.*

"You can actually stage almost whatever you want. Scenes go up and down, you can have black curtains, you can close them if you want and do black box theatre shows."

*Federica Rocchi*

The technical infrastructure, which is on the same level above the whole interior, allows for a great variability of space configuration. Lights can be hung anywhere, the space can be divided. The stage can be in the centre, with the audience pit around it, or the other way round. The stage can be on an elevated podium with the crowd in front of it, or vice versa.





## 19 | spaces with potential

*Every day we walk past perfect spaces for a cultural centre that we can't see. When somebody shows us how it can be done, it suddenly becomes so obvious.*

Everything is most intense and most expensive in the centre of the city. There's the biggest supply and the biggest demand, the most expensive land and most expensive rent. Village Underground hit the jackpot with its location — central London — thanks to the ability of Auro Foxcroft to see the potential of creating a feasible space where no one else could see it before.

After dismantling the bridging of a viaduct across East London there were a few sections of big pillars (15×20 metres), which offered a levelled area three floors above ground. Tube carriages and shipping containers were placed on the pillars, forming the working space of Village Underground.





## 20 | gas holder

*A grand space has closed one chapter of its existence; its future has not been decided yet. It is already clear that whatever will be created in it will be extraordinary.*

Two huge, industrial gas tanks are emptied, cleaned and adjusted to the technical conditions that were possible, but it is still unclear what their new purpose will be.

The space inside is crudely beautiful, similar to all big spaces constructed for technical purposes, where no attention was paid to their actual aesthetic effect.



## 21 | train station

*Stanica still functions as a station.*

“The negotiations with Slovak National Railways to rent the building for a symbolic price took us two years. We were too young to be accepted as partners for negotiation by the company. That is why there was Marek Adamov's father to make the appointments and even accompany us to the official meetings. We started the renovation of the whole building with our first short-term contract that allowed us to use just one room. It was only later that we finally got the contract to use the whole building for the next 30 years for a symbolic annual fee. The contract included an obligation to invest a minimum of EUR 300 000 into the renovations.”

*Robo Blaško*

Hundreds of people pass through every day on the local route Žilina-Záriečie. Everyone, even those who have never been inside to see a performance or have a coffee, feel the benefit of it being a cultural centre. It is clean and safe throughout the day, and the surrounding area is held to an above-average standard.

Thanks to the train live, in space is vivid also besides cultural ewents, all the day.



## 22 | studios in wagons

*In the beginning there was a personal need.*

*Its fulfilment brought along unplanned fulfilment of the same need for a broad group of other people.*

"Auro Foxcroft studied furniture design at university. When he finished it, he found it hard to find a studio space in central London that wouldn't cost a lot of money. He was on a train to Switzerland when he had this idea of getting old cheap carriages and transforming them into offices.

Together with forty other artists, he used four decommissioned tube carriages of the Jubilee Line and two shipping containers.

In the meantime, he doesn't need a studio anymore since he stopped working in interior design — he has become the director of a cultural centre."

Amelie Snyers





## 23 | beer crate venue

*The theatre under the bridge with 150 seats, built without a permit, is legally documented as an art installation by the local authorities.*

Materials:

- | 3000 beer crates,
- | 800 straw bales,
- | 10 m<sup>3</sup> of regular wooden boards,
- | 60 sheets of chipboard,
- | 120 old railway sleepers,
- | two 12-metre shipping containers,
- | two skips of clay loam,
- | ten thousand nails,
- | 1 km of screw rods,
- | one thousand screws,
- washers and nuts,
- | fifteen-hundred wood screws,
- | one skip of gravel to level the ground,
- | one extension cable
- for the electricity supply,
- | two barrows,
- | one small scaffolding,
- | 100 volunteers
- | 3 months
- | 10 000 euros.

Already in the 1<sup>st</sup> year the money spent on inviting performers has exceeded the cost of the construction threefold.



## 24 | growth

*From a two-month event to the top of cultural centres in Europe. Step by step, forty years.*

### 70s

- | In the summer of 1970, Melkweg hosted a two-month event with a varied programme on a similar scale as they do now. It was much smaller at the time.
- | After the intensive event they closed for a week, and when they re-opened, the whole building was dedicated to a four-week performance about death. It wasn't about changing the building then; they only made the inevitable renovations.
- | They received money from the city to do construction, at least to make it conform to the safety regulations.
- | After the following summer, they closed the building for a whole year.
- | In 1972 they got the building on leasehold.
- | They started reconstructing it, which they continued for the next 25 years. It was do-it-yourself at the beginning, everyone did what they could. They interrupted the programme for 10 days to focus fully on construction and improvements.

### 80s

- | In the 80s, the social atmosphere changed. Amsterdam changed with it, and Melkweg had to change too. The dark building opened up for the light.
- | They still didn't own the whole building, so when the remaining part of it became available in 1986, they took the chance to annex it under their administration.

### 90s

- | In 1995 they built a hall with a capacity for 1000 people and widened the entrance. Everything doubled: the number of performances, audience, staff, profit. It was a great success.
- | However, new spaces caused people to perceive the building as divided into two parts: new (hall, entrance) and old, which was considerably less developed.

### 2000

- | In 2000 Melkweg was completely redone. All the spaces were on a high level and they were finally technically adjusted to what they'd always been used for.
- | Suddenly it was possible to organise bigger events, invite more well-known artists.
- | Cor Schlosser thought — “that's it, the building is finished, I can go and do something else.” That's when he saw the plan of a resident theatre company from the city theatre (their neighbours), who did not want to perform in the old city theatre anymore. They needed a new space, one that wouldn't limit them, as the old one in the historical building did. He asked an architect, who was managing the previous reconstruction of Melkweg, whether it would be possible to create the space somewhere between the buildings of Melkweg and the old city theatre.
- | The architect designed a box, to float above Melkweg.

- | They started building in 2005 and the space was opened in 2009. Both previous reconstructions cost 2.5 million Euros, this cost 50 million.
- | It seems that this was the last thing to be built in the small area. Everything is working.

*Notes on lecture by Cor Schlosser*







## 25 | re-location

*Relationship to the place where we work is important. The team is even more important.*

„The whole area was built in the 20s, during the Fascist era, under Mussolini. It was a place for stocking goods, fresh and frozen food. The building we are in used to be a warehouse. We used to be in a slice of this place, because it was really huge and it's like a labyrinth. We just took one part.“

A few years later the conditions changed with the owner planning to refurbish the building for a different purpose. Interzona had to move to a different building in the area.

„At the beginning it was very difficult to leave this place and go there. As you can see, this was very peculiar, while the other one is a rectangle, completely empty, and we felt like we didn't belong there. But then we started to like it and then to love it. In a way we can say that we understood the importance of being a strong group. And the place doesn't count anymore.“

Ada Arduini



We are climbing over the barriers and visiting the original venue, now an empty building.





## 26 | mistakes

- | Build the biggest cultural centre.
- | Artists are the best accountants.
- | Don't get involved with the community.
- | Don't make a storage space.
- | Keep secrets from each other.
- | Don't inform people; surprise them.
- | Ask sponsors for money and don't contact them ever again.
- | Buy the smallest, cheapest and oldest car.
- | Ignore the town planners and architects.
- | Finish your space at the beginning, so you don't have to improve it later.
- | Follow the rules and strictly obey the law.
- | The profit from a bar or a shop? You don't need it.
- | Trust everything that's said, don't put it on paper.
- | Do several projects at the same time.
- | Focus on the aesthetic, not on content.
- | Use one space for all activities, don't try it out before the opening.
- | Don't rent equipment, buy it.
- | Don't measure, just cut.
- | Don't set deadlines.
- | Don't worry about how the building looks from the outside.
- | Don't bother with the mess outside, it's not yours.
- | Do things conventionally and copy others.
- | Be a dictator.

*Living Underground workshop 2012  
participants*

## 27 | when it will be ready?

*When is a building finished?*

"We never have opening parties.  
If people ask — when it will be ready?  
Never. It's not something that becomes  
ready. It's something that exists and  
hopefully evolves forever."

*Stuba Nikula*



## 28 | think tank

*It is better to consult professionals with certain issues.*

*In 2005, Buenaventura was at the point of changing completely.*

*It was supposed to leave the old building for the new one and redefine itself. The 59<sup>th</sup> Trans Europe Halles meeting offered it the best possible people to help out with the decision making — representatives of all other member centres.*

1.

"The Oficina di Buenaventura Cultural Centre is located in northern Italy, 40 km from Venice. Castelfranco Veneto is a small, prosperous town with 30,000 residents.

**We have:**

- | A concert venue for 100 people
- | A bar
- | An apartment with rooms for five volunteers
- | An Internet room with 12 PCs
- | A conference venue used also for courses (tango, theatre, photography, video, etc...)
- | A kitchen for 40 people
- | A darkroom."

*Buenaventura staff*

2.

"The meeting drew from the extensive knowledge and experience of its members who were able to share stories of the start of their projects.

Buenaventura should use existing buildings. They should start with a small house with space around it and develop slowly.

**They should have:**

- | A theatre with a seating capacity of 200 and good flexibility with the ability to become a flat floor throughout.
- | 2 Dressing Rooms
- | A music venue for 300 standing people which may also be used for music rehearsals.
- | A bar/café should be the hub of the centre, serving all the spaces and able to open to the outside in the summer.
- | 4 workshops (e.g. photographers, painters, artists, sculptors, etc.)

- | Residential accommodation: 10 places for permanent resident BV staff
- | Private kitchen for permanent residents.
- | 10 places for short-term artists and guests.
- | A Conference Hall for up to 100 seated.
- | A catering kitchen able to serve up to 100 people.
- | Offices with 20 work stations
- | Technical storage (Minimum of 2)
- | Independent premises for children's activities.
- | Green space outside.
- | Parking for cars and bicycles."

*TEH meeting report*

3.

"Whatever you decide for the future of Buenaventura, it is your decision. What we advised are just our views and thoughts. My only advice (to misquote the father of Socialism) is that 'philosophers and politicians spend most of their time talking and arguing about what is wrong with the world — when what is important is to change it."

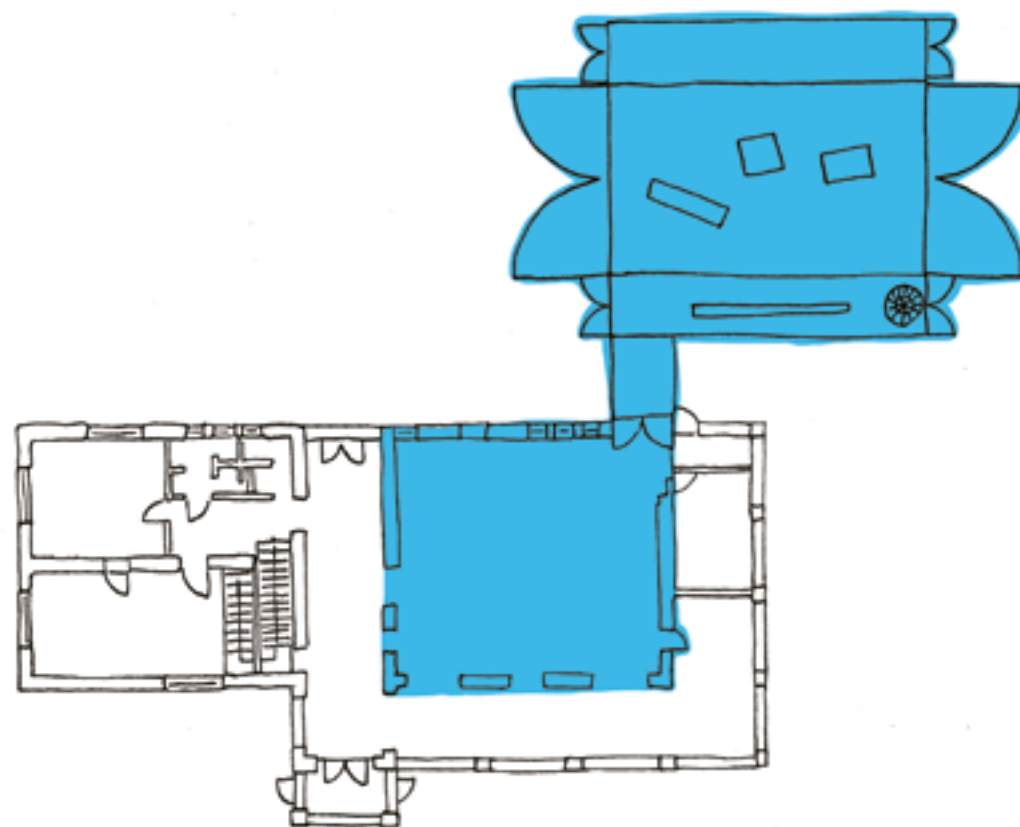
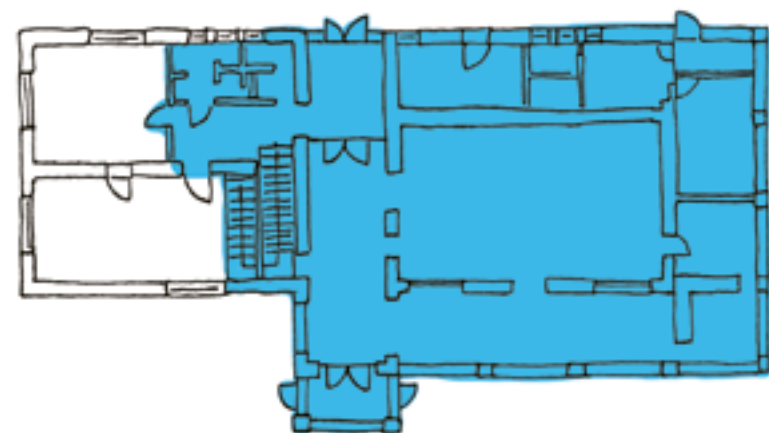
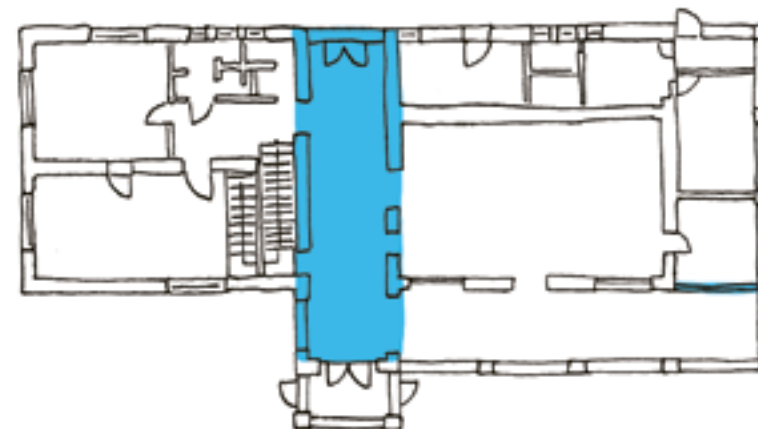
*Paul Bogen*

4.

The old centre closed down. The new one was never built and the group fell apart. We can't be sure whether one day Buenaventura won't be renewed or have a follow-up centre.

## 29 | flux

*Since 2003 the train station has been rebuilt many times.  
It is already clear that the current state is not final.*





## 30 | venues



*Melkweg*, Amsterdam



*Interzona*, Verona







**Menų spaustuvė**, Vilnius



**Stanica Žilina-Záriečie**, Žilina



**Noass**, Riga



**Verkatehdas**, Hämeenlinna





***Pekarna magdalenske mreže, Maribor***



***Village underground, London***



***Melkweg, Amsterdam***



***Łazienka Nowa, Kraków***



# 31 questions to ask yourself

In the history of Stanica, there have been two meetings where together they revised the positions of everyone who works here and everything that represents Stanica — the activities they are doing, the distribution of responsibilities, the mission, the vision and the future plans..

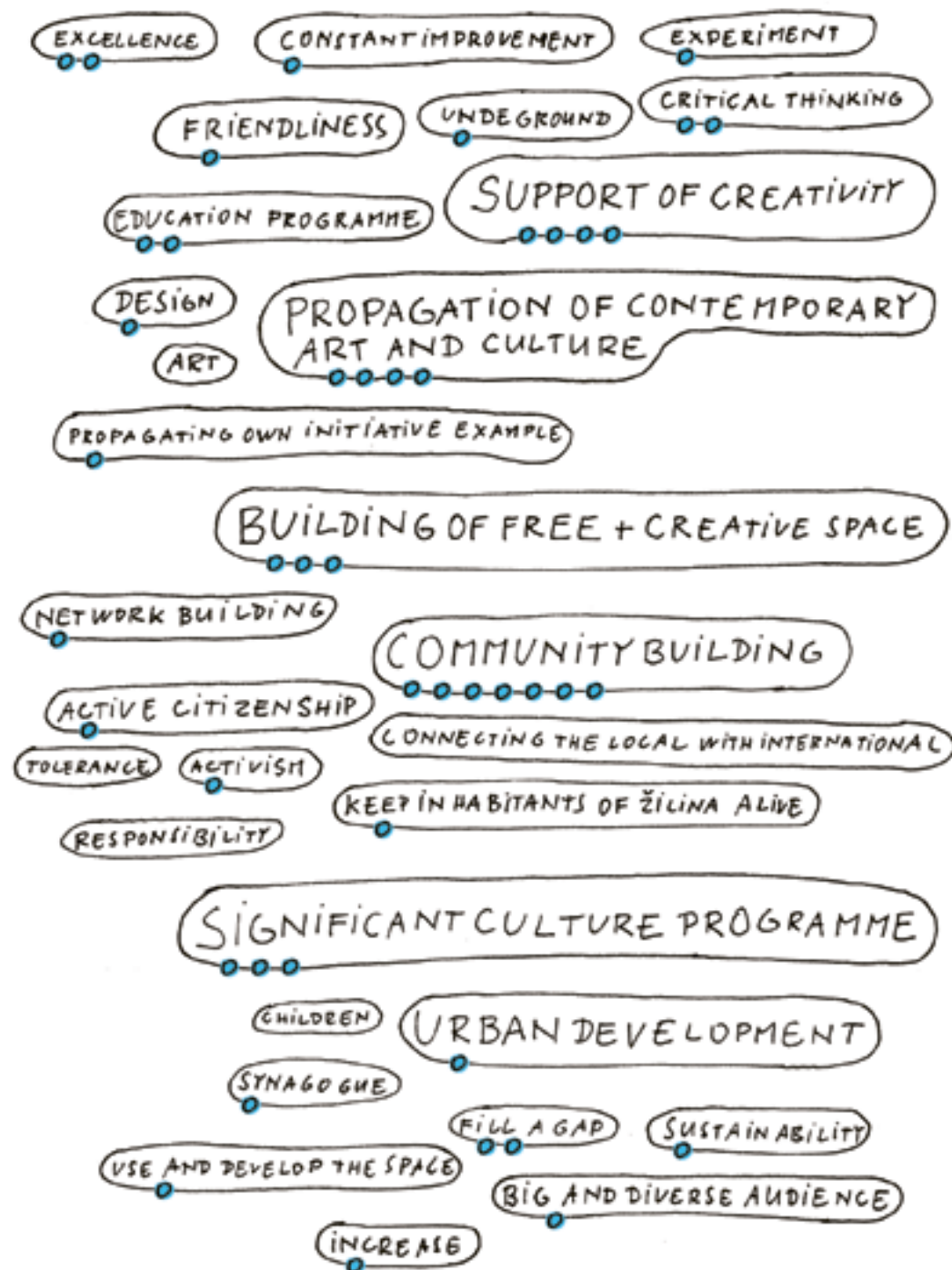
Most of the people are not the same; the team has grown. Stanica has become a well-established institution which deals with a different set of problems and thus, the structure of its planning has changed.

2004

- | 8 x job descriptions
- | activities
- | target groups
- | volunteers
- | internal communication
- | mission
- | reconstruction of the building
- | responsibilities
- | traffic management
- | where does Stanica see itself in 5 years?
- | to-do list

2012

- | 14 x job descriptions
- | what don't we want at Stanica?
- | what characterises us?
- | what do we want to change?
- | who doesn't want to do what?
- | who has the main responsibility for what?
- | mission
- | what are we successful at?
- | what's our motivation?
- | what are we not doing and should be?
- | new system of bar management
- | new system of meetings
- | our history
- | solutions for the space crisis
- | organisation structure





## 32 | advice on renovation

"In 2005 we managed to avoid being closed down for not fulfilling certain health and safety regulations. This marked the beginning of our project to completely renovate a culturally, historically and architecturally significant building and put it to public use as a theatre.

Antic Teatre's renovation is important for the following reasons:

| Neighbourhood renewal: in this neighbourhood, currently undergoing transformation in the very heart of the city's old town, many of the buildings do not comply with current regulations and are in bad condition. Improving the environment gives the neighbourhood new life, in addition to the residents themselves and people who are passing through.

| Performance arts: Barcelona has many theatres, but young and experimental companies find it hard to gain a foothold in the market. With affordable ticket prices and a welcoming policy, Antic Teatre opens the doors to innovation and new audiences.

Social centre: in its original incarnation as the Circulo Barcelonés, the centre provided cultural activities for poorer local people. Antic Teatre continues along these lines, as a meeting place for people from the neighborhood.

The basic renovation project comes to 950,000€. This includes work to guarantee load-bearing standards in the performance hall, new toilets, improving and extending the performance hall, a new terrace, all the new installations and restoration of the façades. Our contract, signed in 2007, gives us 20 years to complete these jobs.

### List of the completed renovations:

- | 1. Structural reinforcement of the floor in terrace, hall and bar.
- | 2. Blocking the windows in the performance hall, soundproofing the hall and reinforcing it with iron beams.
- | 3. Construction of a cabin for technicians.
- | 4. Building a moving grid for lighting and other props.
- | 5. Reconstructing the whole terrace and access steps.
- | 6. Building male, female and handicap-accessible toilets.
- | 7. Creating secondary access for the disabled, which doubles as an emergency exit.
- | 8. Fitting of a lift for access.
- | 9. New electricity and plumbing systems.
- | 10. Installation of several fire doors.
- | 11. Fireproofing.
- | 12. Installation of smoke detectors and a hose connection point for firemen in case of a fire.
- | 13. Installation of an air conditioning system in the theatre, bar and foyer.

### My advice:

As the person responsible for the Antic Teatre I found myself in a very difficult position, with absolutely no experience in building renovation (much less for listed buildings!), with no knowledge of architectural blueprints, renovation projects, or official regulations.

To all of you who want to make changes and are responsible for a cultural centre, that is, who sign, pay and have maximum responsibility for everything, You really must read the whole project through in depth. Even if you aren't an architect and can't understand it because it's not your specialisation, you must do this. If you read it over and over you will begin to understand. You need to find an expert and technical manager of the project. Someone who is familiar with all applicable regulations for work according to law, to obtain all permits, and in our case, the final or initial license favorable for control of the environment."

*Semolinika Tomic*



## 33 | non-financial support of renovation

"The hardest is to find money for building (e.g., electricity) and the easiest is for the programme. For the building we use part of the money from the bar and donations. For reconstruction, you actually don't need money — you need material and people. It is easier to search for volunteers or for companies that can donate material than to ask for money.

More than half our reconstruction was done that way."

*Marek Adamov*



## 34 | communication of an architectural vision

*The workshop, which dealt with the architectural vision of the development of Stanica for the next 10 years, was unique not only due to its content, but also because its results were coherently formulated and presented to the public.*

Reconstruction of the original building of the station has not even been finished yet and it's already necessary to think about what to do once it's complete. What are the boundaries of Stanica? How much can it grow? The goal of the Living Underground workshop is a manual for use of the area demarcated by the Rondel plan, most of which is taken by a road, railway track and parking lot.

All the outputs were published at the end of the workshop in a detailed brochure; a 6×6 metre model was created on the platform. There it was visible for people who don't come to the performances and only use the station to get on and off the train.

"A 3D model outside S1 was a must. Most importantly, we had to let people know what we are thinking about. Here's the station, here's the rondel, the structure will be here."

Marek Adamov





## 35 | cover first

*How to begin reconstruction? If a building is not going to fall and it doesn't need a structural overhaul, it is necessary to enclose its exterior, which protects it from atmospheric exposure. The roof and façade are acceptable, but we need to close the openings of the buildings. Then we can work inside year-round.*

There will be a hostel, a café and a cinema. One of the first steps in any reconstruction is new windows. The building is now under lockdown — nobody unauthorized can enter, it won't rain or snow inside. Order outside, chaos inside.



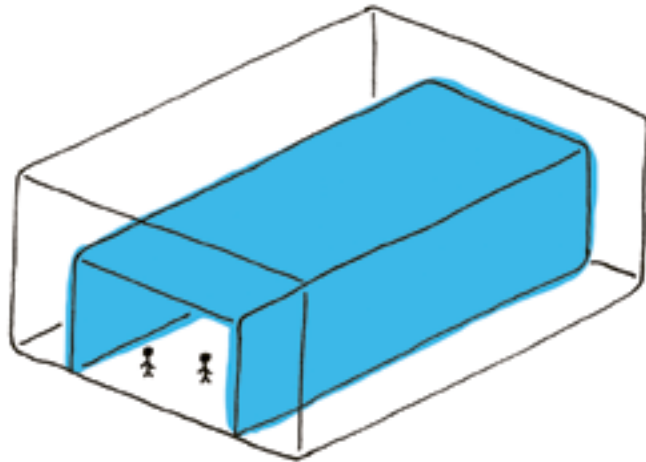
## 36 | venue reduction

*A big space can always be made smaller.*

The hall, which originally served as a gym, turned out to be too big to be operated economically during the heating season; too many square metres, even more volume.

### Temporary solution

The hall will be prepared for winter mode every year. Simple scaffolding will be built, fixed on the bearing roof construction, appropriate space will be delineated with textiles to offer all necessary comforts, and it will be easier to heat.



### Permanent solution

A permanent solution will be to build a permanent object — a box, whose walls and ceiling will be offset from the external walls and ceiling of the building.

Since a lot of buildings are being demolished nearby, they can use windows from them for free, or for the cost of transportation and labor. This is where the biggest challenge lies — to coordinate the logistics of removing windows from a building in the time between the end of its operation and the demolition.

The result is:

- | Low budget
- | Recycling
- | Experimentation
- | Socializing
- | Advertising

## 37 | temporary partitions

*A big space offers more options than a small one.  
You can't turn small rooms into a big one, but a big  
room can easily be divided into smaller ones.*





## 38 ■ separating public from staff

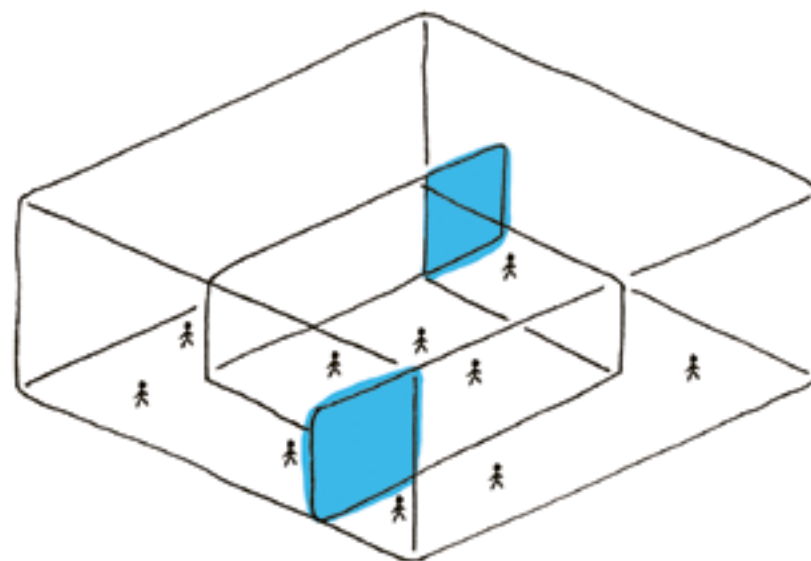
*A lot of operational problems can be avoided by separating the space for visitors and staff. It seems obvious — if only this rule wasn't breached with almost every centre's conversion.*

Teatr Łaźnia Nowa has the advantage of being a building that easily enables such separation.

Venues are in the center section.

The left section (by the garden) and the front section (by the street) are designated for the public. This way you enter the venues and the bar.

The right section (facing the neighbouring building) and rear section (facing the stadium) are designated for staff and performers.



## 39 | narrow venue

*In a small, narrow venue, the capacity of the standing audience can be low due to the inefficient arrangement of access corridors. By reducing their number you can achieve a better balance.*

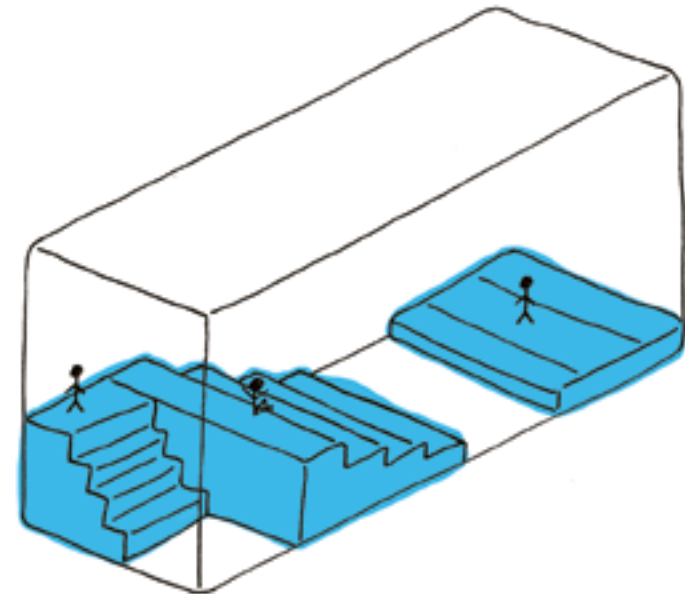
"Antic Teatre's theatre hall measures 22 m deep, 5.2 m wide and 4.4 m high. We can fit around 80 seats.

As our venue is multifunctional, we want seats that can be put up and taken down very quickly without need for technical experts. The most important aspect for us was how to resolve the problem of audience access, how they enter the hall and how they get to the seating. We didn't want two aisles, one to come in and one to go up to the seats.

Seating for an audience is designed in modules and specifically for a small space, where each centimetre counts. The whole floor consists of moving platforms, each measuring 90 cm in width. These platforms can be raised or lowered along rails fixed to the walls on either side. At first, we thought the platforms could be raised and lowered on pulleys, but the final decision is to have a small motor attached to the ceiling.

The audience enter the hall and immediately on their right is a stairway. Once they climb the stairs, there is only one corridor where they can enter the rows and sit on specially designed cushions."

Semolinika Tomic



## 40 | industrial gallery

*An exhibited object stands out more in a neutral environment. In a space with strong character, the two are always in a dialogue with one another. What has more value? The building or the exhibition?*

“In Cathedral, we want to leave it the way it is. We don't paint the walls — that's part of the charm of the building, to keep the industrial feel of it. It is really appreciated, because more and more galleries are white cubes. To come in here and feel the concrete from the industrial era is very nice. It's also a challenge for the artist to make exhibitions here.”

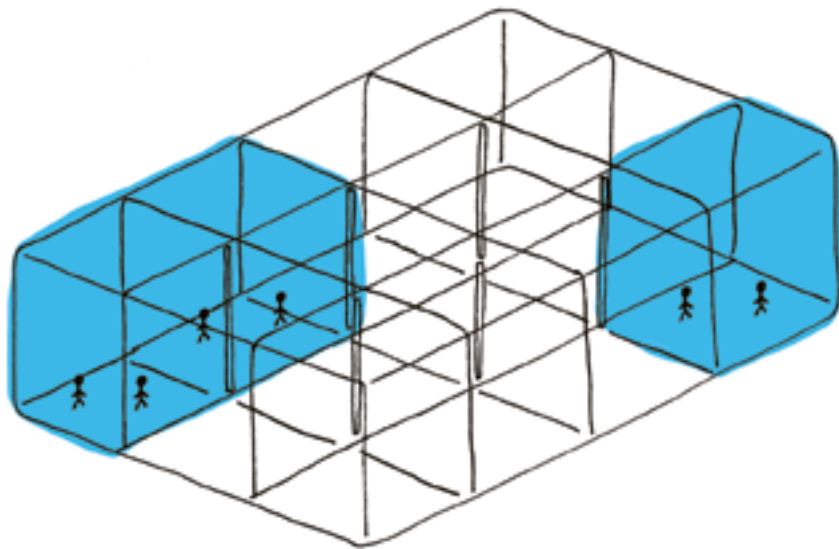
Mia Christersdotter Norman





## 41 | grid

*Huge rectangular fields of poles are the only size limitation for the programme in this hall.*



## 42 | mobile furniture

The space is vast, the floor is even.  
Tables, stage, dividing walls and other  
furniture are constructed to be easily  
moveable by a single person.





## 43 | instant blackbox theatre

*The theatre hall is a neutral space with blacked-out walls and ceiling, so that full attention is paid to the spotlight, where the performance takes place. That's enough.*

On the ceiling there is a grid for the lights and sound equipment. Walls are covered by another black curtain.

These adjustments can be removed anytime, and the listed building is preserved.



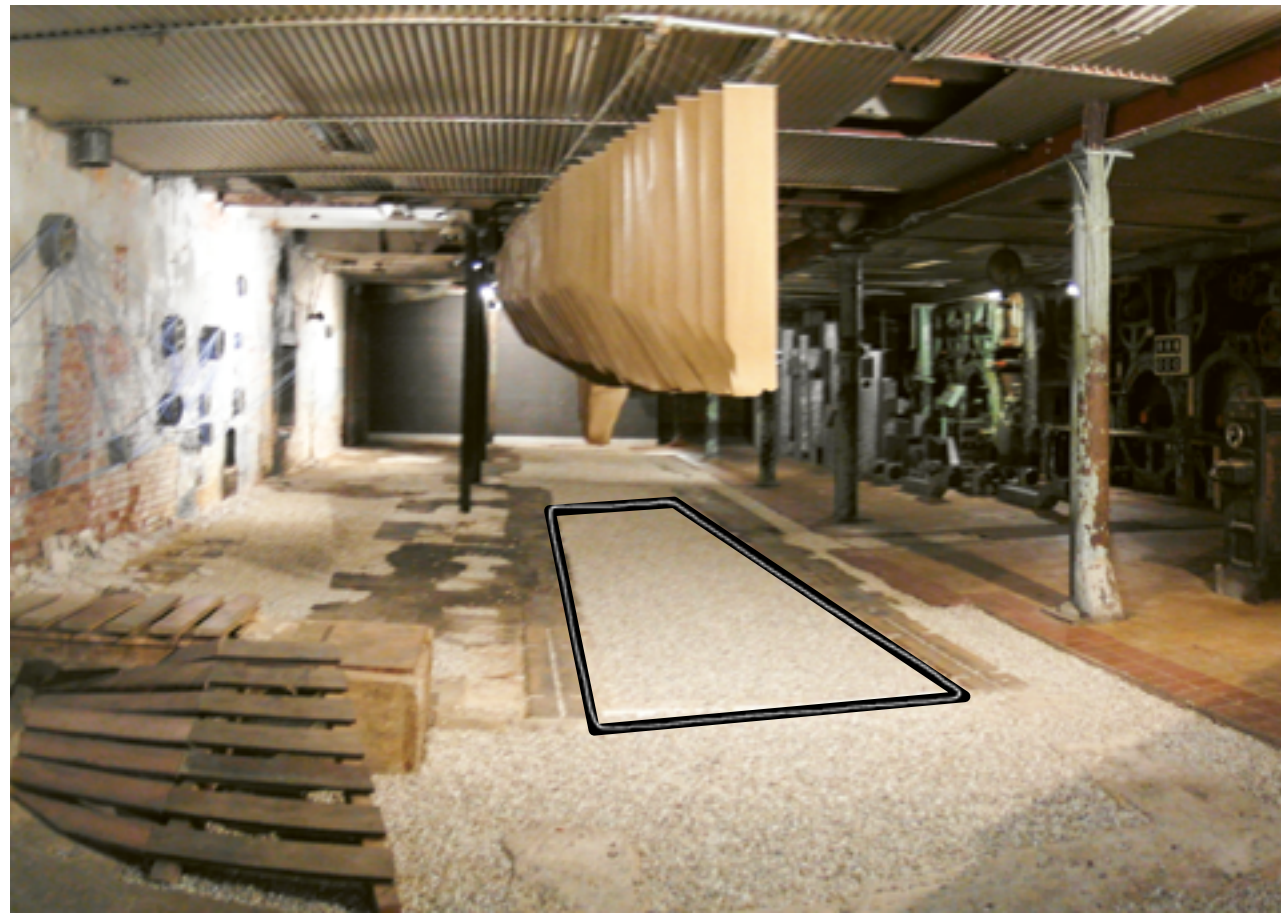


## 44 | flat floor

*Some holes are better filled than covered.*

In the past, this was the seat of some big machine. A machine so big and complex that the space around it was tailored to place the controllers and material input and output points on a level where the workers could reach them. After removing the machine, the floor was left uneven with variable depth.

Today the floor is even, filled with compressed gravel. A quick, cheap and temporarily sufficient solution. The gravel can be taken away at any time, still fully recyclable.



## 45 | telescopic seating

*A venue that can offer facilities for theatre, projections, dance, concerts where people are seated, concerts where people are jumping, company parties, congresses, filming — that is a profitable venue. To enable such a variety of programmes, technical equipment needs to be adjusted.*

The theatre seating is divided into segments which can be mechanically pushed into a panel by the wall. The most time-consuming thing is to turn each seat individually to a horizontal position. Then it's enough to push a button and, in seven minutes, the seating is gone.



# 124 | credits

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