DESIGN STRATEGIES FOR TRANSFORMING CROSS-BORDER REGIONS

BY INTERNATIONAL STUDIO

NOWADAYS EUROPE IS FACING THE CONCRETE EFFECTS OF ITS POLITICAL UNIFICATION, THE FREEDOM IN EXCHANGE OF GOODS AND PEOPLE, THE OPENNESS OF LABOUR MARKET, THE INCREASING COMPETITIVENESS OF METROPOLITAN URBAN AREAS, THE IMPROVING OF NEW FLOWS OF MIGRATION BETWEEN NATIONAL BORDERS AND THEIR PROGRESSIVE IMPAIRMENT. AN ANALOGY COULD BE DONE TO WHAT, IN HISTORY, EUROPE WAS EFFECTIVELY REPRESENTING, AN ALWAYS CHANGING BORDER AREA, A CONCERN METHOD TO SHARE AND MIX DIFFERENT IDENTITIES.

But how these everyday life phenomenons are impacting the governance and the policies for our living environment? There is an ongoing attempt on the European level, with the subscription of the Pact of Amsterdam, to give stage to these contemporary urban changes fostering a more sustainable spatial and territorial asset for Europe. There is, indeed, a common awareness to rethink regional identity beyond administrative borders and achieve a more complex and successful cooperation between countries. Bringing the cross-border issue into the public debate on a European level might mark the starting point for a reflection on the means to overcome physical, economical, administrative, or bureaucratic barriers and obsolete practices.

The initiative of the International Studio is inscribed both in IBA Process and in the necessity for cooperation that the several academies involved demonstrate through excellent achievements in research. For example the studies conducted on Milano peripheral areas by Ilaria Valente (Polimi), the experimental researches in education by Thijs Asselbergs (TU Delft) on energy supply for living environment, the careful observation of historical layers of the city in IUAV research, the attempt to give new impetus to difficult social conditions in Rome Housing Lab, are evident links that this partnership wants to enlighten as a fundamental resource and method for European regions.

In complex and rapidly changing environments, and in time of crisis, this kind of experimentation, such as the International Studio, with the encounter between social and economical needs and the excellence in innovative research could provide tools for activating positive transformations on territories.

The 2016 International Studio in Venice re-discussed these issues within the exceptional frame of IBA, a potent tool to transform regions both in physical and in mental spaces. The experience of IBA Parkstad, in specific, addresses a cross-border lens of observation of its territory, part of the transnational Euregio Meuse-Rhine area linking Belgium, Germany and The Netherlands. Not just as case study, but as widely applicable working method to face urban problems at large, by setting up smart territorial schemes and processes. IBA Parkstad can be seen and used as an example of the way international European cooperations contribute to a better understanding of urban potential in realizing a new vital economy and a socially ecologically and spatially sustainable development.

A RESEARCH FRAMEWORK BEYOND THE INTERNATIONAL STUDIO

Fabrizia BERLINGIERI

THE INTERNATIONAL STUDIO IS MORE THAN A WORKSHOP. IT AIMS TO FORM ALLIANCES IN EXCELLENCE OF RESEARCH, BY CONSTITUTING AN INTERNATIONAL PANEL OF ACADEMIES THAT COULD SUPPORT CURRENT AND FUTURE PROCESSES OF TRANSFORMATIONS RELATED TO CROSS-BORDERS REGIONS AND URBAN AREAS, INTERACTING AS EXEMPLARY INITIATIVE WITHIN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT, I.E. THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR CITIES AND REGION.

This research framework is promoted by IBA Parkstad and supported by eight Universities in cooperation with European Experts. Specific expertise fields constitute the strengthen of this Alliance that involves the Universities of Technology of Delft and of Eindhoven, the Maastricht Academy of Architecture in the Netherlands; the Hasselt University in Belgium; the RWTH Aachen University in Germany; the Politecnico of Milano, the IUAV and La Sapienza in Italy.

As pilot research project for the International Studio, Parkstad area is an exemplary opportunity for the development of an original method to address a specific focus on cross-border regional problems and to disclose new economic growth potentials.

For Parkstad the objective is to enlighten a new narrative for its territory made by re-composition of the fragmented urban landscape, reconciling over impressed and layered territorial frames into a revitalized meaningful unity. Moreover Parkstad is now facing a crucial moment for transformation within IBA Context. This is a unique occasion to contribute in a complex and integrated process, such as IBA Parkstad is, that is based on a threefold approach: PRACTICAL that relates to design processes lead by the involved municipalities and stakeholders through candidate projects; PUBLIC that engages social participation as active component in decision-making processes; ACADEMY that focuses on research approaches and methods to foster results on the higher possible level. In that sense the International Studio is also part of the IBA Parkstad Academy activities.

Following the idea of an integrated approach, as grounding method, the International Studio aims to develop innovative forms of interaction between theory, project development and civic participation. It is a multilevel process, unrolling education and research activities in different temporal terms.
a short term (2016), i.e. the International Studio Venice 2016;
a mid term (2016/2017), in which each university pursues research and education on
Parkstad in their specific academic programs;
a long term (2020), presenting results for the final exhibition of IBA Parkstad.

The short term (Venice 2016) consisted in the kickstart of the International Studio, hosted at TU Delft and at IUAV in Venice. The three weeks workshop had the objective to set the common ground for sharing research topics on Cross Border Regions, thanks to the specific expertise of each academy and the cooperation opportunity given by IBA Parkstad. Five general topics related to IBA Parkstad issues, as in the Propeller scheme, have been common guidelines for developing innovative design strategies and policies on four selected areas:

1. The North gateway of Schinweld Airport
on the german border, related to the necessity of implementing transnational relations in infrastructural accessibility, approached by the research group of Politecnico di Milano;
2. The Roman Quarter in Heerlen city center, in which becomes evident the necessity of a dialogue with the physical and mental traces of a transnational shared territorial Roman history, approached by two students groups of IUAV Venice and Hasselt University.
3. The North/South axis between Aachen and Heerlen, retracing common identities and landscape unity beyond national borders, approached by the students group of RWTH Aachen University.
4. The Bekkerfeld district in Heerlen South, seen as innovative educational hub looking for revitalizing actions and models for contemporary urban areas, approached by the research group of University La Sapienza of Rome.

The selected case studies are part of the ongoing candidate or attention projects for IBA Parkstad, that will be developed and presented as some of the pilot interventions for the final exhibition in 2020. The task, for each university group, was to address not only specific design strategy, but also possible processes and/or policies for transformation.

By engaging a larger public - citizens, institutions, lobbies - it is possible to foster the future of this area while enforcing its spatial values. After these three weeks of knowledge and research methods’ exchange, a solid network was set up. Each academy showed, in the final results of the Venice experience, a clear approach and a specific lens of observation about Parkstad urban area as a borderless region. An important moment to support the IBA Parkstad process and a promising start for forthcoming cooperation.
CROSS-BORDER FRAMEWORK

THE NORTH AREA OF SCHINVELD AND THE RENEWAL OF THE GLIDING AIRPORT

Ilaria VALENTE scientific coordinator
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FRANCESCA BERNI, GIORGIA COLOMBI, LARA FRACCIADORI, SANDRA MAGLIO, MAURO MARINELLI, ELLENA SCATTOLINI, GIULIA SEITTI, ALISIA TOSIGNON participant PhD students and researchers

The conceptual strategy is based on the accessibility implementation addressed by two paths, one more natural (rural ring) and one more urban/artificial (urban ring). By this, it is possible to define an infrastructural framework, where provide interventions for the reuse and recycle of areas and existing buildings.

PROJECT AREAS. The design approach leads to a series of important cross-border insights. Connections and nodes become the real cross-connecting elements between the pedestrian ring and the urban path. The system identifies thematic design actions as a series of urban micro-projects linking the two systems due to issues related to local traditions.

ENERGY. The model of energy production and distribution is quickly changing from a mono-directional grid based on big plants for energy production to a more complex one, in which energy flows are multidirectional, due to both the diffusion of renewable energies and liberalization of the energy market. In this new system energy is locally produced, used and managed in new subsystems called microgrids.

DESIGN PROPOSALS. The design proposal starts with the development of the north gate area, which is called Portal of Onderbanken. The requalification and development of the glider site (the small airport) defines a system of trans-boundary connection linking the new project to the existing activities in Germany. According to the strategy, the glider sites is no more an isolated place but becomes a connection element between different places, different landscapes and different countries.

The overall vision for soft infrastructural accessibility and tourism sport area in the Northern area of Parkstad and tourism sport area.

PREFAE. As part of the IBA Parkstad, this proposal aims to identify an interscalar strategy in which the overall goal is to define a framework for a series of coherent and complementary design actions that are taking in consideration the peculiar geographic position of the place as a cross border area.

READING. The study area is defined by the airport site on the north (Portal of Onderbanken), by the quarries in the south area and by the western gate, embodied by the Nuth railway station site, south to Schinnen. The whole area is characterized by high-quality landscape elements, close to those there are both abandoned infrastructures, such as the railway system, and active lines, like the motorway ring under construction.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. In according to the existing European Agenda, the proposal is consciousness that the European Union is one of the most urbanized areas in the world and the urban areas play a key role in pursuing the EU. This area can be considered as a metropolitan area crossed over different countries, like Germany, Belgium and Netherlands. Starting from this, the development financial program identifies a general strategy ruled by a consortium of universities, local stakeholders, both public and private. This consortium establishes priority program and specific financial channels, but also the way is working on different scale of intervention through state funds, association of municipalities and local funds. Part of these can be addressed in several strategic axes of INTERREG Program.

THE OVERALL VISION FOR SOFT INFRASTRUCTURAL ACCESSIBILITY AND TOURISM SPORT AREA IN THE NORTHERN AREA OF PARKSTAD AND TOURISM SPORT AREA.
The Renewal of the Steel Construction building

FRAGMENTS AND STRATIFICATIONS.

AS FOUND. Starting from Aachen, we visited the zone by bicycle. We found a lose net of bigger straight roads and smaller rural paths to travel on. We saw and perceived certain aspects very clearly like the wind, the agricultural use of the soil, very clearly like the wind, the light, and the wind turbines. The fragmentary and seemingly casual composition of different remains became evident. The difficulty of recognizing and understanding is caused by a lack of contextualization of the fragments.

THE VALUE OF THE USUAL. The landscape consists of almost invisible fragments filled with historical significance and very usual and visible traces of the area’s actual use - agriculture and wind energy. Only together, these two parts - the meaningful and the usual - form a cultural landscape.

A SYSTEM OF SIGNIFICANT POINTS. The overlapping of the different thematic layers allows the identification of intersections and interrelations between fragments. These form what we call the "System of Significant Points".

LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS. The aim of our project is to create a new level of consciousness. We think that people should be able to understand the history of the places they are moving and/or living in. A better understanding helps to find, recognize and read the fragmentary hints of history. This new levels of consciousness could trigger a series of new events and activities - initiated by the local inhabitants.

FROM IMMATERIAL TO MATERIAL. Many of the "Significant Points" are invisible right now. They only exist on a mental map. In order to transform them from immaterial into material we introduce a new layer. This new layer consists of a grid of micro-interventions at those points, which we identified and localized within the System of Significant Points.

CROSSING BORDERS. The project works on different types of themes or layers: those crossing the borders and creating common stories and identities of the whole Drielanden-area like the Roman or the mining layer, and those incorporating the differences between the neighbours. We think that both the common and the specific characteristics enrich the area.

ACUPUNCTURE. The system of interventions is based on the precise localization of meaningful points. It intervenes with the existing and not overwrite it. In the first stage, our instruments to create a new level of consciousness consist in an immaterial one - a thematic map to hand out to people – and material interventions that should be micro. To do the micro-interventions we adopt strategies from land-art. We call this Acupuncture.

FROM DAILY USE TO GRADUAL TRANSFORMATION. The project aims to trigger a gradual transformation of the area. We think that the deeper knowledge of the area will initiate a series of actions and events leading to gradual transformation, which in the future - could lead to more intense forms of tourism.
INNOVATION IN PARKSTAD REGION

Roberto CAVALLI: director of education
Thijs ASSELBERGS: scientific coordinator
Lidy MEIJERS; Annebregje SNIJDERS: teaching advisors

THE FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE & THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF THE DELFT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY HOLDS A LEADING POSITION IN ITS FIELD ON BOTH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL. ITS INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH GROUP PART OF THE IBA PARKSTAD ACADEMY INVOLVES THREE DEPARTMENTS THAT HAVE CONSOLIDATED WORLDWIDE RELATIONSHIPS, PLAYING A PIVOTAL ROLE IN SEVERAL ONGOING NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS.

AMBITION. As a key member of the IBA Parkstad academic body, the Faculty of Architecture & the Built Environment main objective for IBA Parkstad 2020 is strengthening the relationship with the involved academic institutions, working together towards the creation of concrete encounters for research and design in academia as well as in practice. In addition, the exchange of knowledge and experiences will actively contribute in sharing awareness about the challenges and opportunities present in the area, fundamental condition for the consolidation of the common future agenda in the Parkstad region.

PROJECTS. The context of Parkstad urban agglomeration shows challenges, problems and opportunities that match very well with our programs of architectural design and research. IBA Parkstad concentrates on three main issues: energy city, recycle city and flexible city. These topics include not only the physical and tangible aspects, but also the mental and intangible ones. The relation with the educational activities at the Faculty of Architecture & the Built Environment lays at the techno-innovation, experimental development, landscape or cityscape, cultural society and heritage. At this moment two specializations of the program work to tackle with themes and questions of IBA Parkstad in the master program: Architectural Engineering and Heritage & Architecture.

ARCHITECTURAL ENGINEERING Studio INTECTURE. How can we optimize our living environment whilst dealing with those challenges? How can we integrate innovative technical solutions in our architectural design? The field of architecture is facing new challenges: vacancy, changing comfort, economic and historical aspects involved in the conservation and transformation of buildings, particularly religious or cultural buildings. Buildings is one of the main urgent themes in contemporary architecture. Finding an appropriate balance between old and new is therefore of fundamental interest. Heritage & Architecture is concerned with preservation and renewal in existing architecture. The research by design conducted in this studio focuses on the architectural and technical aspects involved in the conservation and transformation of buildings, particularly including those of cultural significance.

New forms of Energy; Landscape, Intecture Studio

Master Studio on Renewal of vacant Churches in Parkstad, Heritage & Architecture
This research team works in Eindhoven as well as in Maastricht. The department of the Built Environment at TU/e minds primarily the technology of the building and solutions that contribute to the cultural dimension of the built environment. Research and design are scientific in nature and form the foundation of the education. Education at the Maastricht Academy of Architecture is internationally oriented, project-based, flexible, structured and tailored to the individual student. This is the advantage of a relatively small institute located in an international region.

Keywords: Building construction; Art & Architecture; AMBITION.

Tu Eindhoven, Department of Built Environment and Maastricht Academy of Architecture are working closely together both as part of IBA Academy and for education activities regarding the topics addressed by IBA Parkstad. Moreover a strong experimentation character is present in all its products that have a great variety.

PROJECTS. The main feature of these common experiments is based on the necessity to address a new branding figure for Parkstad able to foster the image for a suitable tourism cross-border region in Europe. The post-industrial perspective for dealing with this particular shape is the discovery of a geoglyph that it contains: a giraffe. Attention for the giraffe may speak to imagination of a large public, and its place in Parkstad is literally situated next to GaiaZOO, the well-known zoo of Parkstad. The reason for this particular shape is the combined effect of the trajectory of the train tracks and the first highway for automobiles, the N281. The idea to take the giraffe geoglyph as a potential tourist attraction factor for IBA Parkstad is that its body is where most of the visitors by train and cars arrive in the city. They will be invited here to transfer to the use of electric bikes (IBA 2020 bikes), exploring the Leisure Lane, as ‘green line’ through Parkstad, with lots of attractions for relaxation and exploitation of the character of a post-industrial landscape.

The TU Eindhoven dedicated a series of graduation projects to IBA Parkstad. Starting from the shrinking condition of Parkstad urban area, suffering the flow migration of people near borders, the design project tries to transform this negative condition in a potential future asset transforming the empty built environment thanks to innovation in architectural typologies for housings and tourism facilities. Some examples are given by master students on Heerlen cityscape, arising the higher level of design with the nomination of Archiprix Holland. Also the slow mobility pattern could be seen as an important component of revitalization for landscape accessibility, improving the quality of the entire natural areas of the region. One of these proposal became an IBA attention project of the 2014 Open call. The ‘bicycle highway plus’ study is about the bicycle road that in the near future will connect the centre of Parkstad with Aachen, strictly related to the case study presented for the International Studio Venice 2016. The project proposes to add tourist use value by means of information pavilions that make especially bicycle tourists more aware of the architectural culture that Parkstad and Aachen share, looking most carefully at two architectural master pieces: a church by Rudolf Schwarz in Aachen and the warehouse Schunck in Heerlen. In steps the pavilions along the road tell the story that connects the two buildings. The trajectory of the ‘bicycle highway plus’ is so to speak one leg of the giraffe. The Maastricht Academy of Architecture dedicated a study on another leg of the giraffe, the N281. The result of the study suggests to also reshape the N281 as activity road for bicycles and a variety of cultural activities.
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF DEALING WITH ROMAN RUINS IN THIS SPECIFIC SITE?

How to place them in a re-evaluation process that takes into account their specific conditions? These are the questions on which the design proposal is founded. Heerlen is situated along one of the old communication routes, which was represented also in the Peutingerian board connecting the different provinces of the Roman empire. This specific location allows us to broaden our design strategy, which not only concentrates on the road that connects Heerlen with Aachen, but also involves possible relations between Heerlen and the cities that arise along the Via Belgica.

A TRANSNATIONAL ARCHEOLOGICAL ROUTE AROUND THE VIA BELGICA.

The archaeologival itinerary starts form Heerlen city center and spreads along the antique Roman route. Along it, a series of didactic points and accommodating facilities arise, often reusing existing structures or inducing the pop up of new designs on the ruins. Since it is not always possible to see the remaining, the design proposal involves multimedia instruments. These could also be implemented in time, according to excavation’s plans, but also become a service and support for guides during their tours.

A NEW ARCHEOLOGICAL PARK.

The arrangement of specific cycling paths and archeological itineraries, makes the Thermenmuseum an attractor point. It becomes not only the starting point of a landscape itinerary, which tells the archeological history of the place, but also makes it a crucial point of interpretation of the surrounding territory. The design proposal faces the presence of later layers that have built the city and, that overlap according to different logics. These logics have changed in time and have differently interpreted the relief condition of the place. The reconfiguration of the public spaces at the current level of the city is combined with the necessity of connection between the Thermenmuseum and the library building, which will become the museum extension. These two design requirements find an answer in the realization of a new archeological park, which is the foundation element of the design proposal. The realization of new archeological excavations allows, on one hand, to make visible the presence of these two realities within the city and the extent of their difference.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

Tourism and identity are the cores around which the design is structured. The presence of archeological evidence tells the history of the place and build its identity. On one side, tourism incentivize the use and development of a territory; on the other, it promotes the reading of the landscape and the acknowledgment of its own identity. The exceptional character of the proposal themes makes the participation of the public administration essential. It is, although, important to stimulate the interest and encourage the involvement of other institutions such as universities and schools, tourist boards, neighborhood councils. The planning of touristic itineraries ought to stimulate also the interest of housing facilities and hotels along the path. With the support of specialized regional marketing operators it is possible to build new business networks for tourism and research.
The Via Belgica archeological context

Nick CEULEMANS; Marijn VAN DE WEIJER
Peter BONGAERTS
QUARTER OF HEERLEN
(RE)DEFINING THE ROMAN QUARTER OF HEERLEN

What is the main identity of a shrinking population.
and combat the negative effects made
secondly, explored strategies and challenges
defined. Perceived challenges or ribbons in the
 Проект. The response to these observations took the shape of a ‘Strategy Matrix’. The strategies included ‘Greening’ - inserting green spots or ribbons in the city - ‘Airating’ - transforming enclosed space into open space by cutting through or removing
building blocks - and ‘Stratifying’ - joining together key urban artefacts by connector spaces either lifted up into the air or sunken under the surface level. Primary explorations of these concepts provided deeper insights into the opportunities and challenges of the Roman Quarter, which led to further exploration in follow-up of the workshop. In Venice, the research question was formulated even more ambitious by asking: What is Heerlen today? Their upscaling of the enquiry led students to take into account spatial conditions on the level of the region, as Heerlen lies at the location of an ancient Roman crossroads, joining the trajectories between Tongeren (Belgium) to Cologne (Germany) and between the German settlements of Aachen and Xanten. The problem definition was extended with analyses of the relatively affordable housing stock, the significant amount of vacant buildings, and the limited quality of public open space.

This led to the perspective that concrete architectural programmes, like a new protective structure over the archaeological site and the migration of the related roman museum and city archives to the vacated public library building, should attain a higher level of impact, by including a search for connectivity and useable public space. The strategies of the earlier matrix were translated into three conceptual stories which were imaginatively projected onto the urban tissue of the Roman Quarter. The first story, ‘(re)Action City’, translates the ancient Roman DNA of the location into the layout of a Euroregional cycling route, conceptually coinciding with the Roman crossroads. The second story, ‘(re)Ignition City’, equally proposes a new connection, but one which is condensed into a single building. This building, an accessible urban scale roof structure, joins archaeological protection, pedestrian circulation and eventual urban space into one architectural statement. Lastly, ‘(re)Living City’ aims to diversify the urban housing stock with novel housing types, hence addressing both the residential quality and the problem of vacancy. The public sites of interest, like the Roman Baths, are enveloped with novel residential blocks. The public inner spaces of these blocks are made accessible with underground passages, which take shape as enriching public spaces, such as open-air theatres.

Strategy 1: (re)Action city
Strategy 2: (re)Ignition City
Strategy 3: (re)Living City

Keywords: Collaborative design processes; Reuse; Community

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REGENERATING BEKKERVELD DISTRICT

ISSUES AND NEW POTENTIALITY:
The Bekkerveeld district’s current state highlights how the area lacks a defined urban identity, both in relation to the city of Heerlen, and to the wider context of Parkstad. This situation is connected to the following issues: a single-function, undifferentiated urban texture, mostly consisting of single-family residences and schools; a lack of proximity due to extensive roads and empty spaces and a lack of elements of architectonic identity that might bring together the community.

THE RENEWAL PROPOSAL. Taking into account the strategic position of the Parkstad region, and particularly of the city of Heerlen, between Belgium and Germany, the proposal aims to strengthen the already existing education poles and develop them in a systemic way, connecting them to other points of urban interest and creating a new relevant centre. The activation of this process will be possible thanks to the enhancement of some urban axes; ideally this will happen through succeeding stages and with the citizens’ involvement. These axes will re-establish a connection between the different urban sectors; they will give new meaning to the structure of public space, and to the relationship between the two different dimensions of private housing and public neighbourhood. Specifically, the proposal suggests to build a HUB in Bekkerveeld district, a centre for learning and for experimenting innovative education methods that encompass all levels of schooling up until the access to the workforce, open to all members of the EU. In the context of the EU, education plays a central role in spreading concerted policies and choices. The Educational and Lifelong Learning Hub (ELLH) aims to further the work of online platform Twinning by supplying the EU with a physical space where teachers and students from all over Europe can meet and exchange views.

THE PROJECT. The project comprises three main elements. The HUB, facing the plaza, is the new heart of Bekkerveeld. The HUB reassembles the pre-existing and disused St. Anne’s Church, school and building under a wide flat covering, equipped with solar panels for internal energy production. These buildings, integrated with new open spaces, shape the place for education activities. The system of pre-existing schools and cultural buildings is transformed and integrated with sporting routes and new related facilities. This system creates a wide and diversified offer of urban functions, especially geared towards the younger generations. The re-organization of some pre-existing road axes creates a new network of roads and thematic pedestrian routes - encompassing history and archaeology, arts and culture, sports and energy - that link the main centres of Heerlen.

DEVELOPMENT DESIGN PROGRAM. The creation of the ELLH in the Bekkerveeld district has the potential to draw people from all over Europe, with positive consequences for tourism. This could re-activate interest in the entire region of Parkstad, particularly for its historical, archaeological and environmental heritage, characterized by the presence of the quarries. Main sponsors could be: EU, in order to launch the ELLH project; the local schools, in order to improve the education they offer; private enterprises interested in building new urban services, sporting and tourism facilities, and new residences in order to meet a renewed demand.
The overall vision to reconnect the Bekkerveld District to the city, tematizing existent paths...

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"Nederland heeft een aantal decennia dingen uitgewist. Wat wij zoeken is de energie die in het ondergrond zit en hoe jij die op een of andere manier kunt uithalen en weer zichtbaar kunt maken."

**THIJS ASSELBERGS**
**TU DELFT**

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"Wir haben mit den Studierenden vor allem am Thema der Identitäten gearbeitet, der versteckten Identitäten, auch gemeinsame Identitäten, was sind gemeinsame Themen die nachvollziehbar sind und haben diese lokalisiert."

**CAROLIN STAPENHORST**
**RWTH AACHEN**

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"Het thema van de workshop is reconciliation, is verzoening, en verzoening van de kwaliteiten van alle tijden door elkaar, is iets wat wij zouden kunnen doen."

**PETER BONGAERTS**
**UNIVERSITEIT HASSELT**

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"E’ una grande opportunità quella di mettere a confronto idee diverse su tematiche così complesse in un momento di trasformazione per l’Europa, in cui cerca una propria identità. Credo che l’Europa in questo momento stia affrontando una fase di decantazione, di sosta e di riflessione."

**LUIGI PAGLIALUNGA**
**UNIVERSITA’ LA SAPIENZA ROMA**

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Parkstad, with Heerlen as the most densified municipality, has a relatively short urban history of barely 100 years. Despite the short time, it has changed its spatial appearance at least three times. The spread out rural environment became a high performant charcoal industry at the dawn of the twentieth century. The coal lasted only for sixty years, then clerks took over the mining employment, finding a desk in the large anonymous administration buildings of the sixties. Meanwhile the city planners, in adoration of the CIAM doctrine, divided the land in mono-functional zones with a one-dimensional use and splitting it with roads and highways. The result is an illegible urbanised landscape, with a poly-centric structure. 250,000 people living in an archipelago of isolated urban zones, causing more motorised traffic than necessary.

Spatial conditions have changed, as well as the social stratification. Segregation, exclusion and poverty have emerged. By lack of employment, the population shrinks, resulting in an increasing unattractiveness of the whole region. Parkstad, is not an isolated case, but an example of what massive urbanisation created in vast regions of Europe. Regions that have to deal with the same problems as metropolises like London or Paris. Many European areas have a mix of urban zones and isolated parts in an open landscape. Their urban appearance and fragmentation have the same spatial and social conditions as the outskirts of, for example, Milano. Like the big cities they are confronted with problems of migration, poverty, vacancy of houses and the decline of shopping streets, unemployment, sustainable energy supply and mobility. This condition can change and even turn around when border-regions open up to neighbours and mid size cities start to cooperate, as shown in the case of Liege, Eindhoven and Köln, a cross-border region that is considered one of the most innovative of Europe today.

How can we re-unite scattered areas? How can we implement The Pact of Amsterdum? How can we develop structures for a more sustainable living environment and place it on the EU Urban Agenda?

The method of the IBA Parkstad can be the pilot case for innovation in policies and process by experimenting with an integrated approach, going beyond the duality of the ‘top-down’ and the ‘bottom-up’ procedure. The integrated approach, was also used in the International Studio where governance policies and design strategies were combined with social participation and research implementation. Resulting in a large, long lasting and durable transformation for the future development of the region. The IBA approach engages people, makes them proud of their ideas and plans by a system of labels. Gathering all initiatives, publishing and exhibiting them, it visualises positive energy, changing the attitude towards the region and creating a new believe in their own future. The IBA exhibition in 2020 is just a milestone in a process that goes far beyond.

In the European perspective the key challenge for restoring the sense of community in the future is to re-gain the idea of ‘common’ and use it as a strategy. The Netherlands whom are working on ‘immigration’ and Belgium, together with France, that have addressed ‘poverty’ as the main task, could find each other in the Parkstad case. Parkstad combines both problems and is an example for similar urban regions. Starting with IBA Parkstad and from there thinking in ripples, first to Genk in Belgium then Aachen in Germany and further on to other regions and countries. All can learn from the IBA method, add on knowledge and develop an European approach.

Universities are an ideal intermediary for Parkstad and surrounding areas. They are analytical and using the IBA context as a think-tank and as a platform to implement and test research results. They share experience and knowledge. A network of European relevance - IBA Academy and the International Studio - reflect on the political, social inclusion, the new impetus for economy, cultural and ecological forms of designing cities and territories. They ease the way for implementation in similar contexts. The EU, more specifically the European Committee for Regions and Cities, should take in consideration to use IBA Parkstad as the pilot project for the Urban Agenda, and foster the alliance between Research, Social Participation, Governance Policies and Spatial Design by the mean of a Knowledge network that focuses on contemporary urban agglomerations. Areas that are parallel and not minor to the metropolitan cities.

with the contribution of prof. Peter Bongaerts, Hasselt University
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