Current Members
Oliver Clemens
Jesko Fezer
Sabine Horlitz
Anita Kaspar
Andreas Müller

2002 Onwards
We have to articulate that planning and design is by no means only a question of form, but always implies - often unacknowledged by the architects - political decisions. Architecture is always in a political field and that this is exactly the realm where we want it to be.
—An Architektur
An Architektur was founded at the beginning of 2002 continuing the work of the architecture collective freies fach – a group that had sought, since the mid 1990s, to assess critically the restrictive reconstruction of Berlin and the relevant political and economical conditions through actions, exhibitions, and publications.

An Architektur is the exercise of discursive architectural practice. Both the critical analysis of spatial relations and the visualization of their inherent socio-political conceptions offer a possibility of political agency. In monothematic issues, socio-political criteria are applied to concrete examples and questions of space and architecture. An Architektur exposes the wider social and political implications of topics which tend to be discussed too introspectively only within the domain of architecture as well as their effect on and relevance to everyday life. (Spatial Agency)

French socialist philosopher Henri Lefebvre, (1901-1991) has been an important source of inspiration for An Architektur. Through the use of space, it is embedded with symbols and meaning as individual bodies live and interact. Subsequent to this: if you want to change society, you must produce a changed space.
Having the same name, (but in English) the Anarchitecture Group started their actions earlier with a collective of artists and architects as well. Based in New York in the 1970s, Anarchitecture produced exhibitions and held events that would encapsulated their critique of the modernist impulses of contemporary culture within which architecture was conceived as a symbol for that culture’s worst excesses and drawbacks. Anarchitecture were very critical of the cultural attitudes that architecture epitomised as what Richard Nonas called the 'hard shell', or resistance to change.

Anarchitecture as a whole tackled architecture's complicity in capitalist modes of production, using wordplay and found photographs to explore issues related to cities, investigating ways of inhabiting buildings and the role of property.

Matta-Clark purchased 15 leftover and unwanted properties in Manhattan for $25–$75 a plot. Ironically, those spaces were unusable or inaccessible for development, and thus his ownership of the estates existed virtually only on paper. This project critiqued and collapsed the American dream of land and ownership that everyone could become "landed gentry" by owning property.

By splitting abandoned buildings apart and slicing through them, Matta Clark and Anarchitecture performed rearrangements and transformations of architecture that critique on the society of the increasing desire for material accumulation, wealth, permanence.

Located and operated in Soho, the group set up and ran an restaurant with open kitchen which became not only an New York institution, but also an business support that sustained local network of artists, and a social and economic hub for the area as well.

"AN ARK KIT PUNCTURE, ANARCHY TORTURE, AN ARCTIC LECTURE, AN ORCHID TEXTURE, AN ART COLLECTOR..."
Using other spatial agencies as platforms along with its self publications, An Architektur aims at spreading the knowledge of architecture and planning to communities and raising the awareness of socio-political conceptions and implications in the urban field rather than pure focus on the architectural objects.

*An Architektur itself is a non-profit, publicly funded organ formed by a small collective of architects.*
An Architektur is increasingly becoming a hub for network of progressive research groups with projects related to critical and political approaches to architecture. Their research and projects take many forms including actions, exhibitions, and publications that critically analyzed spatial relations as a form of political agency. They also have organized conference, the Camp for Oppositional Architecture, which brought together contemporary practices and theorists whose work presents radical critique of the status quo and offers suggestions for alternative approaches.
An Architektur is published bi-annually. Each issue contains research material, maps, and interviews on topics of architecture and planning that are giving critiques in our current society under capitalism monetary systems. Sections of the contents are supplemented by writings from other editorial team, as well as contributions from outside authors. There is now growing co-operation with other groups, academic faculties and research projects.

The Camp for Oppositional Architecture, which brought together contemporary practices and theorists whose work presents radical critique of the status quo and offers suggestions for alternative approaches.
Commons are not simply resources we share conceptualizing the commons involves three things at the same time. First, all commons involve some sort of common pool resources, understood as non-commodified means of fulfilling peoples needs. Second, the commons are necessarily created and sustained by communities and third and most important, commons are always based on commoning the social process that creates and reproduces the commons.

"Commons are a means of establishing a new political discourse that builds on and helps to articulate the many existing often minor struggles and recognizes their power to overcome capitalist society. One of the most important challenges we face today is to dissolve the distinctions between inside and outside the movement and promote a social movement that addresses the real challenges that people face in reproducing their own lives. How can we reproduce our lives in new ways and at the same time set a limit to capital accumulation?" (Massimo De Angelis)
The first Camp for Oppositional Architecture was held in Berlin, in 2004, in a vacant factory-and-office complex. Approximately 100 people including architects, artists, socialists, and journalists from over 16 countries participated in the workshops. The main investigation was on discussing the possibility of resistance within the fields of architecture and planning.

Participants were divided in 3 groups dealing with different aspects of opposition.

1) How can we grasp and relate to contemporary social reality?
2) How can we imagine and design critical forms of architecture?
3) How can we reflect on and intervene into the built environment?

Four Key speakers
Roemer Van Toorn (Berlage Institute, Rotterdam)
Bryan Bell (Architect, Raleigh_USA)
Peter Marcuse, (Professor of Urban Planning, Columbia University_USA)
Dr. Phil. Simone Hain (Art Historian, Berlin)

CAMP FOR OPPOSITIONAL ARCHITECTURE
Berlin, 2004

3Days | 60 International participants | 30 Guest listeners | 4 Key Speakers

- Exchange of ideas within architect collectives
- Oppositional Design Concepts
- Oppositional Social Engagement
- Oppositional Strategies of Intervention
“The small part of the built environment that is subject to planning at all is almost completely controlled by the claims of capitalist utilization: globalized markets and cultures ask for commodified spaces, nation states and corporations require spectacular architectures for representative purposes, the multitude of consumer subjects demands room for individualized privacy. What’s left to do?”

CASCO, Camp for Oppositional Architecture 2006

Featured Topic

- **Alternative Currents** | Tatjana Schneider + Jeremy Till, Sheffield
- **Envisioning Hacker Space** | Alexander Levi + Amanda Schachter/SLO Architecture
- **Architecture and Activism** | Maria Theodorou, Athens
- **Anti-Avantgarde** | Miguel Robles-Duran, Rotterdam
- **The Impracticable Practice of Architecture** | Craig Buckley, New York
- **Aesthetic Radicalism** | Ole W. Fischer, Zurich
- **No Criticism Please, We’re Projective Now!** | BAVO, Rotterdam
- **Detect & Paste City** | Elisabeth Blum, Zurich
- **The Violence of Participation** | Markus Miessen, London

Workshops & Exhibition lead by An Architektur
“Ten Days for Oppositional Architecture” takes up the task of exploring possibilities and conditions of a socially committed architectural practice. Therefore the narrow boundaries of the profession have to be left behind. We invite activists, geographers, architects, planners, and economists representing different critical approaches to discuss and develop concepts and practices that not only try to oppose and challenge the capitalist mode of production of space, but also try to go beyond it—strategies of de-commodification, re-appropriation and alternative production of space. We will look at already existing spatial actions of resistance as well as search for possibilities to further theorize them: How can these strategies and alternative practices be turned into social and political forces towards post-capitalist spaces? (An Architektur, Performa 09)

Featured Topic
The Decommodification of Housing
The Real Estate Crisis, Private Property and the Prospects of Planning
On the Commons: Talking versus Granting Rights
Territory as a Means of Struggle
Reclaiming Capitalist Spaces
Towards Post-Capitalist Spaces

Brooklyn, New York, 2009 (10 days)
Towards Post-Capitalist Spaces
The radical democratic context of the US Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s inspired advocacy planners to politicize the field of architecture by working for groups in society who were previously excluded from planning processes.

The exhibition seeks to develop a method to **visualize self-determined and participatory design** and its radical approaches through design assistance, community building, hands-on experience, social equity planning, and self-help housing in the United States. The project aims to develop a form for visual research that could become part of a **progressive future** of such architecture/planning. The work reflects upon the making of particular community design projects in **dialogue** with those involved, considering usage and appropriation over time. Based on those **reflections**, the method draws on correlated work over the past years to renegotiate the relationship between bottom-up driven architecture/planning and **image politics**. The exhibition looks forward to contributing to more general discourses about visual interpretations and readings of the built environment and its complexities, and to suggest promising formats for communicating the processes.

**EXHIBITION | COMMUNITY DESIGN**

**Participatory Design and Its Radical Approaches: A Visual Journey | Where If Not Us?**
CASCO Founded in 1990 in Utrecht, the Netherlands
Casco was an office for art, design and theory that provides platform for experimental art. Since 1996, Casco has developed a critical programme that explores art in the public realm, questioning the relation between art and its physical, social and political environment. Casco’s approach has been flexible towards multiple forms through public spaces, publications, discussions, workshops, exhibitions, and symposiums or events. Casco maintains questioning approach of visual art to wider social, cultural, and political framework, while investigating those fields are the relationships between theory and practice.

ERforS (Enough Room for Space) Headquarters in Belgium
This is a non-profit organization that stimulates the creation of physical, virtual and mental space for cultural initiatives by initiating and coordinating events and residency / research projects. ERforS wants to expose, manipulate and invent different processes being part of this constant changing world towards emerging social, political and ecological issues, now and in the future. ERforS tries to find its position and generate discussion through working in different cultural contexts worldwide. ERforS acts as a continuous support behind different temporary projects worldwide, and provides a constant space for production, presentation and research, including two residency spaces and a work / presentation space.


