

# *Fieldwork for Writing Urban Places*

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Fieldwork is an expanding field that crosses several disciplines, including art, architecture, urban studies, and the human and social sciences. This cross-roads condition reveals a practice that works in-between disciplines without becoming one, although a theoretical and methodological framework for fieldwork is being established as it is increasingly receiving attention from scholars. There is an emerging debate about how these two terms, 'field' and 'work', should relate to each other and be put together. Several authors have been discussing this challenge, trying to cope with the expansion of the use of the term in multiple contemporary practices. A set of prepositions have been proposed to link 'field' and 'work' with the use of different notations, opening up a series of possible relationships between the terms as well as its potential variation as a verb or noun. On the one hand, work 'in', 'on', 'of', 'from', 'to' or 'through' the field reveal diverse subject's positions in relation to a specific place, differentiating the status of both fieldworker and fieldwork. On the other hand, the fusion or separation of the two words by language marks such as '[space]', ':', '-' and '/' opens up ideas of indistinction, continuity, proximity and distance between the practices and the sites, allowing for the establishment of different modes of action. As Suzanne Ewing put it in her introduction to *Architecture and Field/Work*:

*Fieldwork operates as both a noun and a verb, and this oscillation correlates with a potential oscillation of work and worker which may inflect questions about and understandings of project, construction, design, work in the field. . . . Fieldwork is a practice, not a discipline. It is practised in different ways by different disciplines towards diverging ends, and may contribute to the consolidation, deepening and extending of disciplinary knowledge.*<sup>1</sup>

The editors decision to use a 'slash between field and work' both expresses that the 'field' is increasingly extended and expanded, including human and non-human, material and immaterial, real and fictional dimensions, and that the 'work' is multiplied and disseminated through fieldworkers from different disciplines and geographies, openly in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary arenas. It is from this increasingly complex, multiple, contaminated and fluid condition that we propose to approach fieldwork and fieldworkers in the context of the COST Action *Writing Urban Places*.<sup>2</sup>

### **Fieldwork Engaging Sites**

The fieldwork in the COST Action *Writing Urban Places: New Narratives of the European City* considers urban spaces through the performative experiences of on-site investigations and explorations of the built environment. As such, fieldwork is a research experience that crosses a theoretical understanding of space with distinctive methods of approaching place, engaging a particular site and its territorial array with its social and cultural multiplicities. This combination of theoretical and practical engagement with sites blends people, places and actions to reveal numerous planned and unplanned encounters with existing communities. Therefore, fieldwork should be seen as a critical practice and an exploratory tool by which to understand, articulate and facilitate present complexities that are part of the ongoing process of constructing contemporary urban conditions. Culturally and historically speaking, fieldwork can be traced to the beginning of modernity, both with the figure of the traveller of the *Grand Tour*,

with its rational and emotional investigation of the cultures of historical and exotic places, and the urban dweller of the emergent modern metropolis, confronting an increasingly changing economic, productive, social and psychological environment. In this sense, we could say that fieldwork conflates the investigation of the distant archaeological sites with the research of the near environment of a transient present. On the one hand, the *Grand Tour*, as a journey of discovery of the cultural roots and experience of the architectural and artistic artefacts of the historical past, is materialized in a series of notes, reports, essays, maps, sketches, drawings and photographs produced by erudite travellers.<sup>3</sup> From Goethe to Le Corbusier, passing through John Soane, fieldwork is undertaken as a formative activity and learning practice that builds an authorial cultural background based on the direct experience of reality.

On the other hand, the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century brings the experience of the urban dweller, introducing a new field of investigation that is structurally in line with the emergence of the social and human sciences, such as anthropology, sociology and psychology, and authors like Georg Simmel, Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin. For instance, Benjamin's essays on the metropolitan condition, based on Charles Baudelaire's poetry, captured the energized and transient urban experience of the *flâneur* of nineteenth-century Paris.<sup>4</sup> The *flâneur* is then a 'kaleidoscope equipped with a consciousness', as he/she moves through the city involving 'the individual in a series of shocks and collisions', taking into consideration that 'at dangerous intersections, nervous impulses flow through him in rapid succession, like the energy from a battery'.<sup>5</sup> But the urban dweller faces a double reversible condition, the active perception of the environment by the metropolitan individuals reflects their adaptive transformation by the intensified life of the metropolis. In this context, fieldwork becomes driven by the fascination and shock of these 'wanderers', a fascination that is generated by the multitude of the modern city, and that nourishes further research and exploration.

If Benjamin already called for new technical devices for apprehension of the metropolitan environment, it was Dziga Vertov's *The Man with the Moving Camera* of 1929 that turned this reflection into a ground-breaking filmic work, documenting the ongoing process of the Soviet revolution after 1917.<sup>6</sup> As Vertov mentions in the beginning of the film, it 'is an experiment in cinematic communication of real events' aiming at 'creating a truly international language of cinema' that conflates the experience of a reality in mutation with the technical means used to depict it, from the moving operator in action in real space to the creative *montage* done in the studio. Despite the various interpretations of the relationship between people and places, fieldwork could no longer detach personal subjectivity from its practice as an output of actions and reactions, taken by individual or collective endeavours that transform and are transformed by physical environments, social relations, historical movements and technical apparatuses.

The truth is that fieldwork only became properly named fieldwork after the Second World War, assuming a more radically critical and speculative position, in the context of full-blown modernization and a new geopolitical world order. The issue is not just the understanding of the tangible reality, with its now authorized theories and established methods from the different fields of knowledge, but how to engage with reality from an expansive transdisciplinary position to investigate the margins and invisibilities of an increasingly complex urban and territorial landscape. Searching for 'other spaces' both inside the everyday life environment of the city and outside in the dilapidated peripheral areas becomes the focus of fieldwork practices, intentionally crossing the realms of the political with the aesthetic.

First, the critical focus appears in the investigations of everyday life through fieldwork. For instance, the 'unitary urbanism' proposed by the members of Situationist International (SI) entails a critical exploration of the complexity of the social and spatial context of the city. In this context, Debord's idea of *psychogeography* was brought forward as a way to study spontaneous and

intuitive encounters and overlap of people and places and the influence of the built environment on human behaviour.<sup>7</sup> His concept of *dérive* 'as a technique of swift passage through varied environments' is a 'ludic-constructive comportment, which contrasts it on all points with classical ideas of the journey and the stroll'.<sup>8</sup> Neutralizing the utility and pragmatics of everyday life, '*dérive*'s spatial field is more or less precise or vague according as this activity is aimed sooner at studying a site or at bewildering affective results'. The aim of *dérive* is the dislocation of the usual and constrained perception and cognition of the city, creating 'itineraries' and 'situations' that open up other emotional and constructive interpretations of the urban environment. But Debord claims that '*dérive* difficulties are those of freedom', revealing his utopian tone that hopes that 'one day, cities will be built for *dérive*'.<sup>9</sup> Fieldwork journeys, based on the psychogeographic temporal experience of common spaces, may develop interrelations among people and places, freeing us from fixed and established everyday identities, thus perceiving social and physical space from unexpected and ever-changing personal perspectives.

Second, fieldwork also reorients its focus outside of the urban centres towards invisible and abandoned urban areas, from the dilapidated infrastructural sites to rundown commercial settings that increasingly fascinated artists, architects and social scientists from the 1960s onwards. Eventually, the individual and collective fieldwork excursions taken by Robert Smithson are a paradigmatic example, which could be extended to other artists like Gordon Matta-Clark, Richard Serra and Dan Graham. Robert Smithson's 1967 textual and photographic essay *The Monuments of Passaic*, in New Jersey, introduces the relation of this mundane and dilapidated wasteland with the childhood memories of his hometown, exposing the artefacts and leftovers of this generic and informal urbanity.<sup>10</sup> His 'entropic' approach to these anachronistic and ambiguous 'monuments' leads to the pervasive concepts of 'ruins in reverse', as de-historicized 'anti-romantic' monuments, and 'nonsite', as a metaphoric displacement of a 'site' in his

earthworks.<sup>11</sup> The reversion of time, of the former, and the dislocation of space, of the latter, implicate these 'zero panorama' landscapes in a world out of joint, interrogating the traditional understanding of place as permanent and stable. Therefore, with this idiosyncratic and evocative account of site, fieldwork is destabilized and questioned by the temporal ambiguity and spatial discontinuity of the process of perception and comprehension of place, turning curiosity and gaze into the guides of the exhilarating encounter with these somehow empty and ambiguous *terrain vagues*. In this sense, fieldwork becomes an entangled and unmediated immersion in the real itself.

Fieldwork was initially developed by individuals or groups that share particular interests, but since the 1970s it has increasingly established new alliances with institutions and the academy. Usually conservative and hierarchical, these collective organizations have been challenged by fieldwork projects that adopt critical and even subversive intentions in the relation between places and people as a collective endeavour, advancing new learning tools and experimental pedagogies. The 1968 workshop in Las Vegas that students from Yale participated in with their professors Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour largely changed the perception of urban space and the influence that architecture has on the human understanding of the built environment.<sup>12</sup> Their intentions were not only to '[learn] from the existing landscape' of the commercial strip in Las Vegas as a intensively perceived and lived reality, but also to challenge the emerging discourses of the autonomy of the discipline of architecture. As they say, 'architects have preferred to change the existing environment rather than enhance what is there'. They proposed to short-circuit the dominant disciplinary positions by 'withholding judgment' on the reality as found as 'a way of learning from everything'.<sup>13</sup> The collection of innovative *in-situ* research practices, taken from their fieldtrip and workshop, resulted in a series of images, diagrams of activity patterns, various charts, collages and texts, photographs and films that confronted architectural form

and cultural meaning, enhancing *the forgotten symbolism of architectural form*. Their focus on interdisciplinary collaboration showed their aim to overcome the boundaries of pragmatic and physical approaches of modernist perception of space, or put in their words, 'we are evolving new tools: analytic tools for understanding new space and form, and graphic tools for representing them', because the 'representation techniques learned from architecture and planning impede our understanding of Las Vegas'.<sup>14</sup> With *Learning from Las Vegas*, fieldwork becomes an experimental practice of research within an academic framework, increasingly contaminating the university environment, from Reyner Banham to Rem Koolhaas.

The integration of fieldwork into an academic environment acquired, in the early 1990s, a new political and social configuration with Samuel Mockbee's Rural Studio, based in the School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture of Auburn University.<sup>15</sup> Their engaged intervention in the poor and dilapidated areas in provincial Alabama in the United States is an example of action taken to confront the social weaknesses of the built reality, assuming their agency in society. As Mockbee stated: 'Theory and practice are not only interwoven with one's culture but with the responsibility of shaping the environment, of breaking up social complacency, and challenging the power of the status quo.'<sup>16</sup> The close and practical knowledge of the territory in which they take action allows for a strongly engaged and participated involvement with the place and its communities, from the understanding and debate of the problematics to the collective construction and appropriation of the projects. In the case of Rural Studio, fieldwork not only changed the physical space but influenced social and political reality through the involvement and participation of local communities out of which not only knowledge turns into action, but action transforms reality. The legacy and ongoing involvement of Rural Studio as a community-based practice with its 'Citizen Architect'-approach to fieldwork activity contributes to the creation of strong social cohesion in the existing neglected and impoverished communities, enhancing their integration in society.

Although given here in a chronological sequence of historical relevance, these different interpretations of fieldwork as a critical and engaged practice are in diverse ways manifest in our contemporary society, and present in the fieldwork activities of *Writing Urban Places*. The curiosity of the traveler, the investigation of the researcher, the performativity of the dweller, the production of the artist, the polemic of the architect, the activism of the academic – all on some level contribute to the plurality of the network's fieldwork events that engaged with real places and situated communities. The shift in these characters affects the meaning of fieldwork itself, which has now become intertwined with the actions taken to understand, develop, preserve or simply sustain everyday life. What seems evident today is that fieldwork is an everlasting instrument that not only records reality, but also influences our self-perception and our relationship to our political, social and spatial built environment. Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that fieldwork is an evolving activity, now facing new challenges brought by technological advancements, from evidence-based design to artificial intelligence, that we must synchronize with subjective and intuitive decisions.

### Fieldwork as Spatial Practice

The opening of the spectrum of fieldwork as an experimental, exploratory and engaged activity follows the theorizations of what was to be defined as 'spatial practice'. In 1974, in *La Production de l'Espace*, Henri Lefebvre introduced the concept of 'spatial practice' as a way to bridge the traditional opposition between design activity and cultural framework, criticizing the dominant passive and neutral idea of space and proposing a more active and engaged relation to space.<sup>17</sup> Crossing the phenomenological and semiological approaches with a political and social focus, Lefebvre tried to acknowledge the 'social space' of everyday life in our experience of the urban environment in the context of advanced capitalism. The 'abstract space', homogeneous and rationalized, that characterizes and dominates modernity, should be 'spatialized', brought to the 'concrete' of reality where space is permanently being socially enacted and re-enacted. This *spatializa-*

*tion* is proposed by Lefebvre's new triad of *spatial practice*, *representations of space* and *representational spaces*. The 'representations of space' of the 'conceived' manifest the ideas and procedures projected on reality by those with an active role in designing and building space, the 'representational spaces' of the 'lived' reveal the historicity of the symbolic and imaginary realms of a continuously productive society. In a way, the 'conceived' determines the continuous conceptualization of the 'lived', and the 'lived' implies the historical codification of the 'conceived'. But the originality of Lefebvre's theory on the production of space is mainly in the introduction of the third term of 'spatial practice'. The 'perceived' of the 'spatial practice' focus on the empirical relation with space, acquiring the characteristics of 'competence' and 'performance' within social space, that 'must have a certain cohesiveness, but this does not imply that it is coherent'.<sup>18</sup> The 'spatial practice' connects the conceptual and cultural domains proposing an idea of space as practiced in daily life, bringing together the 'physical', 'mental' and 'social' dimensions of space. With this new theoretical framework, Lefebvre redefined the relation between space, ideology and history, between projects both designed and used and their conditions of production and reproduction:

*If this distinction were generally applied, we should have to look at history itself in a new light. We should have to study not only the history of space, but also the history of representations, along with that of their relationship – with each other, with practice, and with ideology. History would have to take in not only the genesis of these spaces, but also, and especially, their interconnections, distortions, displacements, mutual interactions, and their links with the spatial practice of the particular society or mode of production under consideration.*<sup>19</sup>

Lefebvre's theory of the production of space also gives methodological insights for the practices of fieldwork. From the theoretical basis of *The Production of Space* emerges what Lefebvre would call, in the conclusive

chapter, 'spatio-analysis' or 'spatiology', as a way to critically cross knowledge and experience, mind and body, in the investigation of social space. But, Lefebvre is conscious that 'space is becoming the principal stake of goal-oriented actions and struggles'.<sup>20</sup> In this regard, *The Production of Space* is the follow-up of the 'experimental utopia' presented before in *The Right to the City*, significantly published in 1968.<sup>21</sup> Even if the philosopher reveals a romantic and somehow nostalgic fascination with the pre-capitalist city that emerged with the Renaissance until Industrialization, he envisions the possibility, not without contradictions or obstacles assumed by himself, of emerging 'counter-projects' and 'counter-plans' that could interact with productive reality and power relations. This activist, even utopian, position manifests a strong influence on contemporary cultural, artistic and architectural debates, in terms of expansive spatial research and increasingly of strategies of design. Indeed, the openness and indeterminacy of the ideas of Lefebvre on 'spatial practices' allow for a critical reworking of the idea of fieldwork, gathering interdisciplinary research of our urban environment and experimental cultural practices to act on it. Similarly experimental, in *Writing Urban Places* investigation and performativity were the basis and motivation for fieldwork.

A decade after Lefebvre's book, Michel de Certeau published *The Practice of Everyday Life*, radicalizing some aspects of the concept in its immersion in the practices of daily life.<sup>22</sup> Rarefying the utopian guise of Lefebvre, De Certeau moves beyond the ideological discourse of the social and human sciences, bringing to the fore the 'ordinary' instead, emphasising the subversive potential of the users in everyday life. In fact, he now focused more on practices of 'another production, called consumption' by common people. He changes the perspective from 'production' to 'consumption', taking into consideration that 'users make innumerable and infinitesimal transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy in order to adapt it to their own interests and their own rules'.<sup>23</sup> These collective 'ways of operating' acknowledge, in reference to Foucault, power structures and disciplinary apparatuses, constituting 'the innumerable practices by means of which

users reappropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production'. Assuming that 'marginality' became widespread in contemporary societies, De Certeau wants to 'bring to light the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals' that subvert the organization and distribution of power in everyday life, allowing a relation with 'otherness'.<sup>24</sup> Opposing 'strategies', as emanating from political, economic and scientific 'space' of power, to 'tactics', as insinuating from minor, alternative and fragmentary opportunities in 'time', he tries to escape the negativity framing everyday life, stimulating creativity and activating memory. The 'tactics' manage to elude the polarity between power and spatial practices, exercised in everyday activities like 'reading, talking, dwelling, cooking, etc'.<sup>25</sup> From the perspective of interpreting and activating place, the identification of 'spatial practices' with the unfolding of narratives and stories that are engendered in the multiplicity of everyday life guided *Writing Urban Places* fieldwork events as collective and shared experiences in real urban places.

In the new millennium, in 2006, Jane Rendell introduced a new definition in her inquiry into the *place between* art and architecture, manifesting its attraction to one another.<sup>26</sup> 'Architecture's curiosity about contemporary art', displayed in the free and subversive activity of the artist in relation to the conditions of production of society, mirrors 'art's current interest in architectural sites and processes', which reveals the sense of social purpose and real engagement of the architect with real places.<sup>27</sup> Re-reading Lefebvre's and De Certeau's theories, Rendell's intuition leads to the addition of the term 'critical' to 'spatial practice'. With this move, she stressed the engagement with everyday life but confronted its instrumentality and commodification, affirming the 'contextual' and 'site-specific' nature of spatial interventions. In her words:

*I suggest a new term, 'critical spatial practice', which allows us to describe work that transgresses the limits of art and architecture and*

*engages both the social and the aesthetic, the public and the private. This term draws attention not only to the importance of the critical, but also the spatial, indicating the interest in exploring the specifically spatial aspects of interdisciplinary processes or practices that operate between art and architecture.*<sup>28</sup>

Introducing post-structuralist, gender and post-colonial discourses, Rendell proposes an interdisciplinary approach to spatial interventions in public space that assumes a critical role in destabilizing the instrumental relation between theory and practice. Affirming 'criticism' as a 'situated practice', she deconstructs the autonomy of the work and the dominance of the medium, allowing for multiple critical intersections and contaminations between artistic and architectural practices. This unavoidable confluence of art and architecture, of spatial research and aesthetic practice, of project design and performativity, of producing work and engaging context, announces the prevalence of the curatorial studies in contemporaneity, something that Rendell's following book, *Site-Writing*, would confirm.<sup>29</sup>

Also in 2006, a more political and activist interpretation of the 'spatial practices' was developed by Markus Miessen and Shumon Basar in their co-edited book *Did Someone Say Participate?*<sup>30</sup> Rather than with establishing a programme, this approach is mainly concerned with the agency of the 'spatial practitioner', radicalizing the 'tactical' approach of De Certeau. So they attempt 'to dismantle the idea of 'the architect' being the one in charge with 'space' and a critique of the 'author-architect in the centre of spatial production', defending a 'participatory' and 'inclusive' approach to urban problematics.<sup>31</sup> With a transdisciplinary basis and a global scope, they intend to develop critical action in reality to counter the dominating 'culture of consensus' and the 'ethos of compromise', instigating tension and conflict as a way to move forward. This 'alternative model of participation within spatial practice' responds to 'today's need for actors operating from outside existing disciplinary networks, leaving behind conventional

expertise whilst inventing new species of knowledge-space'. In this sense, it envisions the 'future spatial practitioner' as an 'outsider' and 'an enabler, a facilitator of interaction that stimulates alternative debates and speculations', in close proximity with the urban, political, social and cultural context in which he/she acts.<sup>32</sup>

### **Fieldwork for Writing Urban Places**

The COST Action *Writing Urban Places* created the space to reflect on the disciplinary and methodological variety implied in the processes of 'sensing the place' and defining its social history through site-specific and contextual exploration. The series of fieldwork events explained below studied urban space in five different cities. The collection includes various narrative approaches to exploring the built environment in relation with historical, cultural and social specificities of the local context.

The first workshop in Osijek was based on the relationship between places and texts, and the conceptual approach of reading the city as text and the text as a city. The method combined understanding and discussing a selection of textual excerpts about the city and using them as a basis to relate with the physical reality by performing specific city walks. This portrayal encouraged participants to create a new narrative for the places in the city that re-examine their meaning. This process enables participants to shift the usual perception of the cultural identity of the city and give different meanings to existing places.

The next fieldwork event took place in Tampere and focused on the relationships between places and people in its former industrial area of Hiedanranta. The idea of the workshop was to overlap the material substance of this urban space with the internal dynamics produced by its inhabitants. The current activities on site are rapidly disappearing due to new initiatives for the urban redevelopment of this area. The stories of local cultural groups and their engagement with the site were essential

operative tools out of which new co-constructed stories were developed, reflecting on the production of space. The series of interviews with local citizens, visual recordings and writings aimed to contribute to the understanding of local sociocultural dynamics overseen by current redevelopment initiatives and to open a debate about the necessity to support the insurgent spatial and planning practices that give valuable creative contribution to urban living.

The third fieldwork event in the series was conducted in the historical area of Çanakkale, Turkey, and the archaeological site of the ancient city of Troy. The workshop intended to juxtapose the rich history of the place by combining the material artefacts, historical facts and fictional stories with one's personal encounter with the physical space. The fieldwork aimed to construct the subjective perception of space, a sentimental journey individually created using the experiences derived from the abstract space of the myth, history and memories. Therefore, participants created their own travelogues, comprised of texts, images and drawings, in which the traveller's ideas of space were recorded as personal reflection on the visited space.

The workshop held in Skopje introduced a fieldwork method that is enrooted in the principles of socially engaged art and public performance. The research aimed to connect places with architecture, emphasizing the brutalist architecture of a small neighbourhood community centre in the forefront of the fieldwork process. Instead of departing from texts, the workshop started with the building as a main character in a story out of which a narrative for this specific place was developed. Various combinations of facts and fiction, interviews with the locals and synchronicities between people, and stories of other brutalist buildings from all around the world were used as a background for a staged performance. The workshop culminated in a performative event in which the fieldwork research was transformed into a public performance instigating awareness for the meaningful value of architecture.

The last event took place in selected neighbourhoods in Tirana and Kamza, in which the fieldwork was used to establish a relationship between two proliferations of politics of built space that coexist simultaneously: the space of the planned and the space of the unplanned. The workshop aimed to relate places with spatial character relying on the theoretical concepts of 'situatedness' and the mutual interdependences of individual (and group) within the (built) environment, the 'commoning', by redefining the actual urban existence based on shared assets that are beyond the influence of market and state, and the 'material unrest' as an activity imbedded in an effort to confront the prevailing societal power structures. The fieldwork actions taken during the workshop used the medium of short films to record the transformational complexity and richness of encounters produced in this parallel system of political practices.

The fieldwork in *Writing Urban Places* followed the merging of practices from art, architecture, urban studies and social and human sciences that intentionally blurs the traditional boundaries between these fields of knowledge, developing experimental and speculative approaches to different places. To do so it explodes the traditional distinctions between academic research in universities and experimental practice in the real world, allowing for a creative and collective sharing and producing among individuals, associations and institutions. This activist and participatory orientation traversed the fieldwork in *Writing Urban Places* with its challenge of bringing together interdisciplinary academic research and real places in European cities.





**Fig. 1a-b:** Combining historical facts, fictionalized stories and actual places was part of the journey that took place in the fieldwork of Çanak-kale and the ancient city of Troy. After the explorations in the field, the travelogues registered personal perceptions and reflections from the archeologic artefacts to everyday events. As such, the travelogue becomes a phenomenological and critical tool through which participants experience and relate with the physical reality. Photos: Eylül Nur Dinç (July 2022) and Giuseppe Resta (July 2022).



**Fig. 2a:** The training school in Osijek was focused on learning how the city walks are an essential practice of urban living and relation to specific places. 'Strolling' and 'wandering' on the streets of Osijek, enriched with reading excerpts of site-related texts, transformed the haptic nature of the walking practice into a new perception of the city in which the imaginative condition is embedded in the physical experience of the city. Photos: Onorina Botezat (April 2022).



**Fig. 2b:**  
Photos: Onorina Botezat (April 2022).



**Fig. 3a-b:** The fieldwork as an *in-situ* research practice allows changes of the built environment through enhancing its existing qualities. The researchers filmed fragments of Tirana and Kamza, aiming to acknowledge the political dimension of the city by recording the processes of 'unplanned utilization of space' versus the 'planned space' as an outcome of the established societal power apparatus. Photos: Holly Dale and Dorina Pllumbi (March 2023).



**Fig. 4a-b:** The Skopje Brutalism Trail workshop explored the tools of performance as a means to re-evaluate the modern heritage in the context of recent urban transformations of the city. The public performance *City as a Stage*, an after-event of the workshop, gathered members of the local community together with artists and architects in a joint venture in which dining, reading and singing become a form of civic activism in order to preserve and reactivate a small community hall. Photos: Mila Gavriloska (September 2022) and Slobodan Veleviski (November 2022).

**Fig. 5a-b:**

The juxtaposition of people, places and activities is an essential part of forming the identity of the local community in the Hiedanranta district in Tampere. The form of practicing 'unitary urbanism' understands the artistic expression of everyday life as a critique of the neoliberal and materialistic urban development that often disregards the value of existing communities, and thus allows the activity



to be explored both as performative event and informal exhibition. Photos: by Blagoja Bajkovski (June 2022).



- 1 Suzanne Ewing, 'Introduction', in: Suzanne Ewing et al. (eds.), *Architecture and Filed/Work* (London/New York: Routledge, 2011), 4-5.
- 2 See: Slobodan Velevski et al., 'Taking Place: Reflections from the Fieldworker', *Writingplace Journal* 7 (2023), 5-15.
- 3 See: Gabrielle Brainard, Rustam Mehta and Thomas Moran (eds.), *Perspecta* 41, *Grand Tour* (2008).
- 4 Walter Benjamin, 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire', in: Neil Leach (ed.), *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory* (London/New York: Routledge, 1997 [1939]).
- 5 Ibid., 31.  
See: Dziga Vertov, *The Man with a Moving Camera*, 1929.
- 7 Guy Debord, 'Theory of the Dérive', in: Tom McDonough (ed.), *The Situationists and the City* (London/New York: Verso, 2009 [1956]).
- 8 Ibid., 78.
- 9 Ibid., 85.
- 10 See: Robert Smithson, 'The Monuments of Passaic', *Artforum* 6/4 (1967).
- 11 See: Robert Smithson, 'A Provisional Theory of Nonsites', in: Jack Flam (ed.), *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings* (University of California Press, 1996 [1968]).
- 12 Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* (Cambridge, MA/London: MIT Press, 1977 [1972]).
- 13 Ibid., 3.
- 14 Ibid., 73.
- 15 See: Andrea Oppenheimer Dean and Timothy Hursley, *Rural Studio: Samuel Mockbee and the Architecture of Decency* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002).
- 16 See: [samuelmockbee.net/work/writings/the-rural-studio/](http://samuelmockbee.net/work/writings/the-rural-studio/).
- 17 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991 [1974]).
- 18 Ibid., 38.
- 19 Ibid., 42.
- 20 Ibid., 404-410.
- 21 See: Henri Lefebvre, 'The Right to the City', in: Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996 [1968]).
- 22 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1984).
- 23 Ibid., xii-xiv.
- 24 Ibid., xiv.

- 25 Ibid., xix-xx.
- 26 Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006).
- 27 Ibid., 3.
- 28 Ibid., 6.
- 29 See: Jane Rendell, *Site-writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010).
- 30 Markus Miessen and Shumon Basar (eds.), *Did Someone Say Participate? An Atlas of Spatial Practice* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).
- 31 Ibid., 22-23.
- 32 Ibid., 24-25.