



The city of the present continuous

It has always been said that the idea of change is an essential characteristic of a city. And, what's more, it's true. Indeed, it is a factor which, from the very outset, has set it apart from the earliest organic cities and the inflexibilities of communitarian universes. However, we could say that there are two kinds of change: the one that unfolds in the sequence of the present, past and future, and the one that occurs in what we might call the present continuous. With the idea of the *occasional urbanities* city we refer to this type of change, the result of the growing complexity of urban societies which makes it impossible to contain them in a specific urban space according to a logic of strict rationality. We use the term «Post-it» to identify these transitory breaks or temporary interventions that call into question the rational distribution of functions in urban space, and thus generate new forms of urbanism and urban aesthetics, causing new sets of problems in the city.

Post-it, therefore, comprises research into new forms of mutation in the city. While public space is determined by types of property which set out to plough up relatively long-lasting continuities, the Post-it places emphasis on elements that furnish contemporary urbanity: ephemeral occupations of particular spaces, the construction of objects which lead us from one place to another, the creation of micro-communities that shift according to the circumstances of the city. While public space has traditionally been designed according to the logic of planning and overall structure – the architectural shape of the city, as opposed to what Julien Gracq calls the shape of a city – as a vast container of people which can resolve conflicts, Post-it introduces those elements of unpredictability and inconsistency that the city itself generates, which are, at times, on the margins of the classical logics of power and production, and at others, under the effects of the exclusion they generate, and, in some cases, to the advantage of groups with a vested interest and forms of speculation.

This exhibition is the result of broad and complex research. Broad because it has been carried out in many places around the world, and complex because it reflects very different dynamics and sets of problems. It is a sign pointing to possible forms of innovation and change, but it is also the expression of new types of conflict and resistance. Because each occasional episode stems from very different situations, the manifestation of needs, desires and mechanisms of exclusion. Because each occasional episode generates new sets of problems and a clash between rights and expectations. Because, after all, Post-it phenomena are nothing more than the expression of a city's vibrancy.

This exhibition could be subtitled *Materials for conceiving a more lively, less fearful and more rebellious city*. A warning to cities like Barcelona which, in recent years, have been subjected to a flurry of regulations more in keeping with a Calvinist city in a cold part of Europe rather than a city prone to outbursts of spontaneity in a warm part of Europe. All things considered, the occasional city contains an element of protest against the havoc wrought by common sense. And, above all, it allows us to renew a principle. The city can never be built against the margins. A city that fosters permanent marginalisation is a failed city.