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Imagining a Liveable Amsterdam

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MATERIAL PRACTICES: Positionality, Methodology and Ethics

Meike Schalk, Karin Reisinger, Elena Markus Kossovskaja, Uta Leconte

Practice-oriented research frequently starts from a 'material' and develops its theoretical concepts and frameworks along the way or as outcomes. Several architectural practices, often in collaboration with other disciplines, and in relation to various geographies, have already begun to radically reconceptualize knowledge production in sustainable processes from the perspective of the material.

Current discussions of materialisms have attempted to go beyond discursive processes, based on unveiling social and cultural constructions to reconsider the organization and compositions of materiality and their socio-ecological and political effects. Over the last two decades, matter, objects, 'things' and artifacts have received increasing scientific attention and become reconceptualized. These emerging theoretical and methodological directions criticize the imagination of the natural world and technical artifacts as mere resources for technical progress and economic growth.

The expansion of concepts of agency and self-organization to non-human entities, as well as the questioning of traditional notions of life and death has become critical (Barad, 2007; Bennett, 2010; Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 2016; Latour, 2021).[1] Karen Barad, in particular, has taught us that the relationship between ontology ('what is'), epistemology (how we know about it) and ethics has to be rethought[2] — which we understand, in this publication, as a task of creatively re-thinking processes of knowledge development in architectures based on recent shifts in the world.[3] This includes an awareness that specific material entanglements and embodied knowledges relate to various inequalities caused by racism, sexism and ableism (Truman, 2019; Yusoff, 2019).[4]

In this complex scope, thinking materialisms together with ethics has been crucial for many contributors in this publication. This collection is the culmination of a one-year long research education programme at Technical University of Munich's Department of Architecture and KTH School of Architecture at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm for the BauHow5 Alliance and the Swedish research school ResArc.[5] In regular gatherings starting with the international workshop for doctoral researchers, 'Approaching Research Practice in Architecture 2021' (ARPA), followed by five further modules, participants explored the matter of their research projects through open lectures by invited guests, literature seminars, workshops, peer reviews and writing sessions. The group included participants from fifteen different global universities who contributed their knowledge and experiences to the debates, all with an interest in developing their research practices in architecture.[6]

This research education programme intended to go beyond the predominant Eurocentric discourse in architectural research. We asked the following questions:

How do you work with your material and position yourself?

What are the sources of knowledge in architecture that you are aware of, what voices are included/excluded in a canon? How can we as architectural researchers contribute to a development of knowledge that results in more diverse canons? What are specific relations in your complex cartographies of knowledge?

1 Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge/ Malden: Polity Press, 2013); Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, NC/ London: Duke University Press, 2016); Bruno Latour, *After Lockdown: A Metamorphosis* (London: Wiley, 2021).

2 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*; Iris van der Tuin and Rick Dolphijn (eds), *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies* (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, 2012).

3 See Rosi Braidotti, 'What is Necessary is a Radical Transformation, Following the Bases of Feminism, Anti-racism and Anti-fascism', https://lab.cccb.org/en/rosi-braidotti-what-is-necessary-is-a-radical-transformation-following-the-bases-of-feminism-anti-racism-and-anti-fascism/, accessed: 5 May 2023.

4 Sarah E. Truman, 'Feminist New Materialisms', in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Research Methods*, eds P. A. Atkinson, S. Delamont, M. A. Hardy and M. Williams (London: SAGE, 2019); Kathryn Yusoff, *A Million Black Anthropocenes or None* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019).

5 BauHow5 includes The Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment of the University College London (UCL), Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering (CUT), the Department of Architecture of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH), the Department of Architecture of the Technical University of Munich (TUM) and BK Bouwkunde of Delft University of Technology (DUT). The Swedish research school ResArc includes besides CUT also Lund Institute of Technology (LTH), and KTH School of Architecture at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH).

6 The programme was taught by Torsten Lange, Elena Markus, Andreas Putz at TUM, Meike Schalk at KTH and Anna Boyksen Fellow at TUM-Institute for Advanced Study, and Karin Reisinger, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, who engaged especially with the writing practices of architectural PhD education. ARPA 2021-2022 followed ARPA 2020-2021. See the publication of the first doctoral programme, Meike Schalk, Torsten Lange, Andreas Putz, Tijana Stevanović, Elena Markus (eds), 'Species of Theses and Other Pieces', *Dimensions. Journal of Architectural Knowledge*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 2022.

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Elena Markus, Uta Leconte

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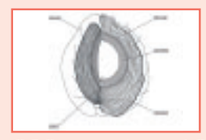

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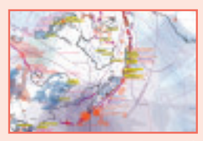

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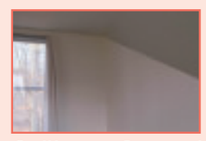

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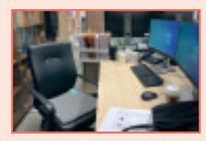

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BIOS

Stavroula Angelaki is a doctoral student at KTH, Royal Institute of Technology. Her research focuses on lighting design in educational spaces. She holds a bachelor's degree in interior architecture and design from the Technological Educational Institute of Athens and a master's degree in lighting design from Aalborg University in Copenhagen.

Estefania Mompean Botias is an architect and urban planner currently pursues her Ph.D. at ALICE laboratory at EPFL (2021-2025). Her research explores the Emergency conditions, the study of their ambivalences, examining the new connotations of regulation that the Emergency States are acquiring, and identifying how architecture and urban studies respond to these situations.

Adrià Carbonell is a Stockholm-based architect and urbanist. He is a lecturer in architecture and a PhD candidate in urban design at KTH Royal Institute of Technology. He is cofounder of the research collaborative Aside, where he writes on the interplay between architecture, territory, politics and the environment.

Helka Dzsacsovszki is an architectural historian from Hungary. She studied architectural history and conservation at the University of Edinburgh and is currently a doctoral candidate at the Technical University of Munich, where she is researching the developing theories on contemporary modern architecture in historic urban contexts during the Cold War from a Hungarian perspective.

Chero Eliassi is a doctoral student in theory and the history of architecture at the Royal Institute of Technology, KTH. Her work focuses on researching how the outdoor environments of the Swedish Million-Program neighbourhoods have—through a social, ecological and spatial perspective—been transformed and used after their construction.

Sonia Cohan is currently completing her PhD on representational imagery in architecture at the Royal Danish Academy in Copenhagen. She has a background in both architecture and photography, and holds a master of architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design and her bachelor of fine arts in photography from the University of Washington, Seattle.

Maretha Dreyer is an architect and lecturer at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (South Africa). She holds an MA in gender studies from University College Dublin (Ireland) and is currently a doctoral student at Hasselt University (Belgium). Her research focuses on the intersection of architecture, gender and mobility studies.

Sebastian Gatz is an architect, artist and trained car mechanic who works at the intersection of art, architecture and technology. He is currently undertaking a PhD in fine arts at Konstfack—University of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm. His research combines ficto-critical and posthuman methods to explore human-nature-technology relationships. He has previously worked and taught at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts for the Centre for Information Technology and Architecture (CITA).

Sreeprada Gogulapati is a PhD candidate in the Department of Design at the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad, India. She is a Prime Minister Research Fellowship candidate. Her current research is concerned with practice-based design research. This research aims to explore the sculptural properties of Jaalis [perforated spatial screens that are common in vernacular architecture] in creating experiences.

Anne Gross is an architect and filmmaker from Berlin, based in Tokyo. She is co-founder of Studio GROSS, with projects published in Japanese and the international media, such as a video series for the CCA. Anne is also pursuing her PhD in systemic thought in the urban realm at the Tokyo Institute of Technology.

Matilde Kautsky is a Stockholm-based architect and PhD candidate in applied urban design at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, where she also teaches. She is especially interested in just cities, equal living conditions and social sustainability. Her research focuses on public spaces, like schoolyards and their architectural morphology, usage and how they are distributed in the city.

Neelakantan Keshavan is a faculty member of the Department of Design at the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad, India. He is keenly interested in design as the cultivation, preservation and proliferation of difference and heterogeneity. His research areas are visual and spatial culture, the agency of the architect, design as a discourse of visions and architecture as an active search for being at home.

Ekaterina Kochetkova is a PhD candidate in the Department of Architecture at Seoul National University of Science and Technology. She graduated with honours from the Faculty of Design at Vladivostok State University and since 2015 has been exploring the intersection of urban life, culture and architecture from the perspective of a foreigner in Korea where she relocated under the Korean Government Scholarship Programme.

Deniz Köse studied architecture at TU Darmstadt and is now a PhD candidate at the Technical University of Munich. Her research in Urban Design focuses on the democratization of urban public space in human and non-human contexts. She also works as a freelancer with projects that involve games in the context of design and architecture.

Torsten Lange is Lecturer in Cultural and Architectural History at Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Switzerland. His work focuses on questions of labour and production in architecture, gendered bodies and the spatialities of care from a queer perspective. He recently co-edited the special issue of gta papers, "CARE", with Gabrielle Schaad.

Uta Leconte is a researcher in architecture and cultural theory. Her work focuses on architecture as a cultural practice in the processes of globalization, transformation and instability since the 1970s, as well as on equity, diversity and inclusion in architectural pedagogy and practice.

Elena Markus Kossovskaja has been teaching architecture theory at the TUM Technical University of Munich since 2014. In her PhD entitled (Dirty) Realism. Analogue Architecture 1983-1987, she investigated the social and political significance of an alternative architecture production with regard to the dirty realism discourse in the art and architecture of the 1980s.

Michelle Mlati is an independent curator and PhD researcher in the project Green Participation; a joint initiative between the KULeuven and Chalmers University of Technology focusing upon the history and theory of inclusive ecological landscape design in the development of green infrastructure in the Low Countries (NL) and elsewhere from the 1960s to present-day ongoing projects at the nexus of climate, ecology, design and politics. She is also a 2023 ICI Curatorial Research Fellow under the Marian Goodman Gallery Initiative in honour of the late Okuwi Enwezor researching The Forest and Desert School emerging from Sudan in the 1960s.

Soscha Monteiro de Jesus is a PhD researcher at Delft University of Technology where she investigates histories of sustainability in urban design from the 1970s until the turn of the century. She is a Steering Group member of the Architectural Humanities Research Association (AHRA) and cofounder of a housing cooperative in Amsterdam.

Natalie Novik is a spatial practitioner, researcher and educator. Her interests include the notion of shared spaces and self-organization, especially in the field of cultural initiatives, commoning, collective care and low-impact ways of living. She holds a master's degree in architecture and urban planning from Chalmers, and she is currently enrolled in a doctoral artistic research programme at HDK-Valand Academy of Art and Design in Gothenburg.

Hongxia Pu is a PhD student researching the 'desakota urbanity in hilly regions in southwest China' at the University of Copenhagen. In 2019 she graduated in urbanism and strategic spatial planning from KU Leuven, Belgium. During her postgraduate studies she completed five international projects and her group works have been exhibited at the 2018 Venice Biennale and the 10th International Biennale of Landscape Architecture in Barcelona.

Karin Reisinger is an architect with a PhD in Visual Culture. She teaches writing seminars at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Institute for Education in the Arts where she also leads the Austrian Science Fund research projects 'Two Ore Mountains' and 'Stories of Post-extractive Feminist Futures'. Her research foregrounds feminist perspectives from within extractive areas.

Meike Schalk is Associate Professor in Urban Design and Urban Theory and Docent in Architecture at KTH School of Architecture. Her research combines critical inquiry into discourses of social justice and democracy, and collaboration in planning and design with practice-oriented research methods. She currently holds an Anna Boyksen fellowship at the Technical University of Munich-Institute of Advanced Study.

Khaoula Stiti is an architect and a PhD candidate at Université libre de Bruxelles in Belgium. She is also an active member of Edifices & Mémoires, a non-governmental organization dedicated to preserving endangered Tunisian heritage. Her research revolves around the convergence of participatory praxis, digital mediums, and heritage awareness. Specifically, her work focuses on the colonial heritage of downtown Tunis, which serves as an example of heritage that is both endangered and contested. In addition to her doctoral studies, Khaoula explores topics related to coloniality, migration, and autoethnography.

Asha Sumra is an Architectural Designer, PhD fellow at Aarhus School of Architecture, Denmark and Visiting Faculty at Bengal Institute, Bangladesh. After studying Architecture at the University of Cambridge, UK and the Catholic University of Valparaíso, Chile, she is currently investigating how ecologies of production, exchange and residue of materials impact building culture.

Zuzana Tabačková is a founding member of the interdisciplinary collective Spolka which is active in the field of urban design in Central and Eastern Europe. Since 2017, she has also been working as a research associate in the Department for Urban Design and Development at the Institute of Urban and Regional Planning at the TU Berlin. Her work combines spatial practice, research and education.

Afua Wilcox is a professional architect and PhD researcher at TU Delft. She has extensive experience in the research and practical design implementation of affordable housing and informal settlement upgraded projects in South Africa. She has also administered a number of housing-related courses at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa. Afua is currently pursuing her PhD in the faculty of architecture and the built environment, with her subject matter based on informal settlement upgrades in South Africa.

Postscript

The ARPA course included continuous writing sessions on the topics of intersectionality, thick descriptions, situated knowledges and positionality.[1] For a writing session in April, we invited the participants to temporarily escape the linear structures of text and engage in mapping the various sources and materials that each of us worked with. What are the references or sources of information for the knowledge production in process? Which people, writings, materials and concepts are important (and often neglected in a thesis)? Thus, during the course that provided the context for writing the contributions to this textbook, we took some time to reflect upon our learning processes and to reconsider from which human and more-than-human sources we have gathered knowledge, and to illustrate those sources. Our chosen format was a map that contained text, images, connective lines and arrows. The mappings that were produced contained an impressive variety of elements: texts; concepts; visualizations of people and further lively creatures, as well as materials; fields; architectures; sites; spaces and places; tools and building elements; videos; annual figures; sound recordings; people; photography; written stories and experiences. Related carefully, the maps showed interdependencies and complexities whilst they transgressed disciplinary attempts at categorization.

As much of this course was inspired, and deeply influenced by, feminist critiques of knowledge production, we need to express our gratitude to Rosi Braidotti for her constant reminders about the importance of critical cartographies that connect peripheries and centres, create awareness of old and new 'Masters' Narratives' and look at the 'micro-geographies of power relations' that rely on local and global connections.[2] When we discussed the produced micro-geographies, specific ways of addressing intersectionalities emerged during the reflections about the sources of our knowledge. Mapping, and thus not taking connections between locations and concepts, materialities and architectures for granted, turned out to be productive. It helped to overcome, or at least generate awareness of, the duality of sites and architectures to be studied on the one hand, and the places where knowledge and power relations are discussed and reproduced on the other (in academia for example).[3] Uniting the skills of architectural illustration with the feminist tool of drawing cartographies based on situating, locating and connecting interdependencies, the method of mapping knowledge production, which is always in a state of flux, was a further step to access a series of questions.

How does the material show diversity and interaction (connections, relations)?
Which complexities could be observed and how is material/architecture a part of these complexities?
How is the personal experience related to further sources? Are there contradictions?
Who are the experts anyway?
Which questions remain open? Is this openness (or silence) productive or indebted to exclusionary knowledge traditions?

When mapping feminist new materialisms, Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin used cartographies to move from classificatory and linear engagements to cartographical engagements with the ability to overcome various binary oppositions. In conversation with Braidotti, Dolphijn and Van der Tuin return to the importance of not only drawing cartographies but also traversing them.[4] Using her 'feminist-materialist check-list', Sarah E. Truman suggests some starting points for qualitative research to outline a feminist contribution to materialist approaches. Truman demands that a couple of points be included; a wariness of exclusion, the inclusion of situated knowledges and intersectional concerns and the deconstruc-tion of assumptions, as well as a responsibility towards newly created networks and genealogies. Returning once more to her list, it became more obvious who and what is affirmed but also excluded by the use of specific sources being cited and collaborations chosen. It also showed the connection between situating knowledges and intersectional concerns 'being recognized alongside of a *turn to matter* and *decentering of Humanism*,'[5] concerns that were broadly shared by the participants in the course.

'Practices of knowing and being are not isolable; they are mutually implicated. We don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are of the world.'
– Karen Barad, 2007[6]

As the architectural researchers and practitioners who came together for this course, we are deeply enmeshed in the daily material practices of building and researching. We are very well equipped with spatial understanding and are able to draw or otherwise visualize connections that we have analyzed in specific places and spaces, and therefore, taking on the materialist implications and mapping them according to the inclusionary tactics of intersectional feminisims. As such, many of the texts in this contribution can be understood as generous but always situated and embodied knowledge cartographies of certain fields, architectures or problems. Giving the last word of this postscript to the cartographies of knowledge means foregrounding the challenging but productive complexity of relations and dependencies during the process of writing an architectural PhD thesis.

1 Some of the writing exercises and methodologies were inspired by Nina Lykke (ed.), *Writing Academic Texts Differently: Intersectional Feminist Methodologies and the Playful Art of Writing* (London: Routledge, 2016). For details on the course, see the "EDITORIAL" in this issue.
2 Rosi Braidotti, 'A Critical Cartography of Feminist Post-postmodernism', *Australian Feminist Studies 20*, no. 47 (July 2005): 169–108, especially page 176.
3 See also M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Cartographies of Knowledge and Power: Transnational Feminism as Radical Praxis' in *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis*, eds Amanda Lock Swarr and Richa Nagar (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010), 23–45.
4 Rosi Braidotti, Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, 'Interview with Rosi Braidotti' in *New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies*, eds Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, 2012), 19–37, here 14. See also Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002).
5 Truman, Sarah E., 'Feminist New Materialisms' in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Research Methods*, eds P.A. Atkinson et al. (London: SAGE, 2019), 10.
6 Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, NC/London: Duke University Press, 2007).

Know-ledge Carto-graphies

Karin Reisinger

Imagining a Liveable Amsterdam

Soscha Monteiro de Jesus

This article investigates how sustainability thinking influenced urban development in the city of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s by narrating microhistories of the *Kadijken*, a former harbour area in the eastern inner city. First, the site and researcher are introduced through a short story that is used as a springboard from which to further explore the rich histories of the site. The following three microhistories are interlaced with archival photographs.

Fig. 1: Aerial photograph of the *Kadijken*, September 1987 (Amsterdam City Archives). For this article, the letters a, b and c were added to the photograph, indicating the places discussed in the article, namely: a. one of the courtyards in the *Entrepôtdok*; b. Laagte Kadijk; c. some of the houseboats and the overgrown quay.

Before Sustainability: *Leefbaarheid*

Since the 1990s the term *sustainability* has become part of global politics and public debate, and numerous policies have been formulated to regulate and shape urban transformations through sustainability thinking. By the 1970s however, a range of approaches to sustainability thinking, such as urban preservation, participatory planning, banning the car and forms of organic farming, had emerged in many European cities. Many of these urban design approaches were propelled by civic-society actors who challenged the status quo and spurred governments into action. This was certainly the case in Amsterdam where, during the 1970s and 1980s, civic society challenged municipal urban policies and strategies by advocating for a more sustainable agenda that interwove concerns for energy conservation with the preservation and rehabilitation of neighbourhoods, environmental stewardship, participation, equity and the right to housing. Rather than using the term *sustainability*, these concerns were often referred to as contributing to the *leefbaarheid* (liveability) of the city. This article highlights some of the approaches to sustainability thinking in urban design in Amsterdam during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s by describing three microhistories of one specific location, in the eastern inner city, called the *Kadijken*. The microhistories are approached through the specific position of its narrator, who grew up in this neighbourhood. To convey this positionality, the introductory description of the *Kadijken* is given through the lens of the researcher's experiences and memories.

Revisiting the *Kadijken*

A yellow and red drawbridge stands out against a long brick building. As I cross the bridge, the familiar shouts of gibbons reach me from the adjacent zoo over the water. The long building, called the *Entrepotdok*, has many entrances directly onto the street, decorated with plant pots and bushes. Before it was converted into dwellings by the architecture office of J. van Stigt, the building housed seventeenth- and eighteenth-century warehouses where imported goods were stored. After the area lost its function as a place of transit, the building became a place where many have made their home. During the renovation, a few tunnels that led directly through the building were added; a short-cut to reach my old home. The tunnels are still dark but the weird odour that used to linger here is gone. I guess someone must have done something about that over the last twenty-five years. It smells fine now, and the walk is not as long as I remember. I have that slightly dizzying feeling of when your body does not realize it is bigger but imagines that the environment has shrunk instead. Before I know it, I have reached the end of the tunnel. I cross the one-way street with parked cars, a low brick wall and bike racks, the pavement sloping slightly upwards under my feet. Soon, I reach a wide sidewalk and stand in front of the house where I used to live back in the 1990s, a postmodern tenement. The sidewalk is vast, sunny, airy and quiet. It is a free space, with many possibilities for movement, and plants, weeds and furniture scattered around. It is as if the pavement speaks to me from under my feet. Welcome back — it seems to say — go, explore, run around, crawl even, stretch out. Take up as much space as you need. You are safe — my muscles relax. I look around. The street is radiant, full of detail, memory and sun. Its contours made of new and old buildings, standing side by side, similar to many other inner-city neighbourhoods in Amsterdam. Then a gap, which is now a playground, originally designed by architect Aldo van Eyck. In some ways it has changed, in other ways it has not. The reddish-brown pavement, the bushes, the snails that you can find there, the large yellow tap on the exposed side of the house, the shining roofs of parked cars you can see just above the low brick wall, the seesaw, the steel play-structure. Everything I have seen, touched, smelled — incredibly close — and far away, countless times. But as I look around I realize that a darkness surrounds it too, places that forever remained in the shadows, because I was not allowed there, because I did not want to go there or because I simply did not. Places my feet never took me, places my eyes never wandered, always skipping over; each time unknown or overlooked, deepening their shadows; an odd feeling of excitement as I step into the darkness, by walking, through conservations, by studying literature and leafing through archival documents. Stories previously unknown to me take shape: of the unwanted visitors and *Entrepotdok* courtyards, the 'war of bollards' in the *Laagte Kadijk* street and the *Plantage Doklaan*, once taken over by freebooters and nature.

Unwanted Visitors, Fumes and Weeds

In the 1970s a group of citizens forming the *Kadijkenkomitee* were the first to put forward the idea of rehabilitating the five-hundred-metre-long warehouses of the *Entrepotdok*, which were listed monuments in dire need of renovation; an idea that was finally adopted by the municipality by the end of the decade.[1] To make the warehouse suitable for habitation, one of the ideas explored by the architecture office of J. van Stigt was creating publicly accessible inner courtyards that would increase the amount of daylight let into the social-housing apartments.[2] During the participative design process, discussions arose around safety and unwanted visitors in the courtyards, such as homeless people, people involved in criminal activities and those addicted to heroin; a drug that was causing many issues in Amsterdam at this time. To address these safety concerns, the courtyards were raised by one level to make them appear more private and discourage people from entering.[3] These considerations would contribute to making the *Entrepotdok* more liveable *(leefbaar)* for its new inhabitants. This was a considerable force behind many of the urban renewal schemes of the mid-1970s and 1980s that dealt with the dilapidated and neglected inner city. Liveability was often tied to questions of preservation, not just buildings and streets, but communities too. In the *Kadijken*, as in many parts of Amsterdam, even squatters were offered housing in new or renovated buildings after renewal. However, the discussions around the courtyards of the *Entrepotdok* show that those in power excluded certain uses and that not all communities were welcome in the area; by becoming liveable for certain inhabitants, the *Kadijken* became more difficult to use for others.

Another use of the *Kadijken* that resulted in many discussions centred around traffic. The current *Laagte Kadijk* street, which is lined on one side by the *Entrepotdok*, is largely free of cars. In the summer of 1985 however, in the so-called 'war of bollards' *(paaltjesoorlog)*, a group of inhabitants attempted to make the street completely free of cars and pollution, and safe for neighbourhood children.[4] Each night they would place a small bollard on the street — in Dutch called *Amsterdammertje* — which would obstruct cars from passing unless they were local business owners and in possession of a key to remove the bollard. Each morning, the municipality would remove the bollard.[5] This was not an isolated incident and many inhabitants have advocated for largely banning cars from the city since the 1960s. This issue still remains part of political debate in Amsterdam today.

A group that also moved away from the *Kadijken*, although they were only living on its borders, were some houseboat owners, urban nomads and several plants, trees and animals. The houseboat owners and urban nomads occupied part of the quay through informal gardening.[6] On the dockside, the *Entrepotdok* inhabitants looked out upon a canal and those informally occupied quays. Today, many houseboats and urban nomad wagons have disappeared, together with their socio-ecological spatial experiments. They range from being legalized to being cleaned up and even criminalized through policy. Conflicts between the rich diversity of the city's uses by various groups and the preferences of the most powerful actors remain part of many discussions surrounding urban development today.

Imagining a Liveable Amsterdam

The history of redevelopment in Amsterdam is rife with conflicts that concern different approaches to sustainability thinking in urban design. A short description through the lens of the narrator's experiences and memories functioned as both an introduction to the location and to the researcher to convey how knowledge presented in this article is situated. From this position three microhistories were introduced: the first on unwanted visitors, tapping into questions on what and who to preserve; the second on traffic, car fumes and safety; and the third on the socio-ecological spatial experiments of weedy houseboats and free-states. These stories tie into wider discussions involving sustainability thinking in Amsterdam during this period, especially concerning liveability *(leefbaarheid)*, that continue to the present day. Further research into these discussions and the history of redevelopment is part of this researcher's doctoral project.

1 Stukken betreffende het voorlopig ontwerp Entrepôtdok [Documents regarding the preliminary design of Entrepôtdok], 1982, 1509-47, 2.3.1.3.3, Ontwerpteam voor het Entrepôtdok, Archief van het Wijkcentrum Oostelijke Binnenstad, Amsterdam City Archives, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (hereafter cited as Voorlopig ontwerp [Preliminary design], Ontwerpteam voor het Entrepôtdok).

2 Eisse Kalk, *Bouwmeesters met draagvlak: Architectenbureau Van Stigt* (Amsterdam: Stichting Agora Europa, 2006).

3 Voorlopig ontwerp [Preliminary design], Ontwerpteam voor het Entrepôtdok; Notulen bijeenkomsten, met bijlagen [Meeting minutes, with attachments], 1986-89, 1509-312, 2.3.1.3.4. Bewonerskomitee Entrepôtdok, Archief van het Wijkcentrum Oostelijke Binnenstad, Amsterdam City Archives, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (hereafter cited as Notulen bijeenkomsten [Meeting minutes], Bewonerskomitee Entrepôtdok).

4 Notulen bijeenkomsten [Meeting minutes], Bewonerskomitee *Entrepôtdok*; Correspondentie betreffende Stedebouwkundige ontwikkelingen Entrepôt Dok panden 3 tot en met 51 [Correspondence regarding the urban development Entrepôtdok buildings 3 to 51], 1983-1984, 1509-102, 2.3.1.3.3, Ontwerpteam voor het Entrepôtdok, Archief van het Wijkcentrum Oostelijke Binnenstad, Amsterdam City Archives, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (hereafter cited as Correspondentie [Correspondence], Ontwerpteam voor het Entrepôtdok).

5 Notulen bijeenkomsten [Meeting minutes], Bewonerskomitee Entrepôtdok; Correspondentie [Correspondence], Ontwerpteam voor het Entrepôtdok.

6 Verslagen bewonersoverleg *Entrepôtdok* B [Reports of resident meeting Entrepôtdok B], 1984-1985, 1509-113, 2.3.1.3.3, Ontwerpteam voor het Entrepôtdok, Archief van het Wijkcentrum Oostelijke Binnenstad, Amsterdam City Archives, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Fig. 2: *Entrepôtdok* 1978–84. In the background is the *Entrepôtdoksluis* and *Oranje Nassau Kazerne*, May 1984 (Amsterdam City Archives/Dorians Kransberg.)

Fig. 3: *Plantage Doklaan*, taken over by *vrijbuiters* (freebooters) and nature, 1984–85. (Amsterdam City Archives/Doriann Kransberg.)