Urban Commoning and Architectural Situated Knowledge

The Architects' Role in the Transformation of the NDSM Ship Wharf, Amsterdam

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Urban Commoning and Architectural Situated Knowledge: The Architects' Role in the Transformation of the NDSM Ship Wharf, Amsterdam

Klaske Havik (iD) and Dorina Pllumbi (iD)

ABSTRACT   This article discusses the collaborative processes behind the redevelopment of the Dutch state heritage ship wharf NDSM in Amsterdam as a case of *urban commoning* that took place around the year 2000 – before the term became commonly used in urban studies. It explores how the former shipwharf was transformed into an "incubator": a creative hub with artist studios, theater spaces, a skate park and other facilities for cultural production. In this article, we specifically investigate the role of architects in this context. Unfolding the process reveals the emergence of the figure of the *participant-architect* who participates in the *shared authorship*, within a *collective situated knowledge*. This knowledge is simultaneously produced in the place and productive of the place.

1. Introduction: Creating Common Ground
1.1. Common ground: a former ship wharf in Amsterdam as terrain to explore collaborative urban practices
This article discusses the collaborative processes that were involved in the redevelopment of the Dutch state heritage ship wharf NDSM in

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Amsterdam with a particular focus on the role of architects in this project. We argue that the NDSM redevelopment was an instance of urban commoning before the term was coined in 2012. In the first section of this article, we will discuss this process to transform the ship wharf into an "incubator": a creative hub with artist studios, theater spaces, a skate park and other facilities for cultural production. This process of redevelopment, which started in the late 1990s, differed in several ways from conventional heritage redevelopment practices. It was initiated by a group of users with roots in the local counterculture and it was supported by the municipality that recognized the potential of this group: a shared symbiotic route. For this reason, it has become emblematic of a cooperative form of redevelopment.

The second part of this article reflects on the contribution of architects to several parts of the project. Although NDSM has been widely discussed because of its experimental character, there has been less reflection on the role of architectural knowledge and practice in the process. In the third section, we describe the negotiation of decision-making and the spatial organization of the site. Finally, in the concluding section, we argue that in the NDSM case, architects were developing new ways to offer expertise while being participants of the collective process, they were balancing multiple positions, as expert, participant, maker and facilitator.

This article thus aims to formulate how such "commoning processes" generate alternative roles for architects. We will argue that these new collaborative processes challenge the discipline and practice of architecture to reconsider its theories, methods and tools, and to incorporate new concepts, additional skills and "ways of doing."[1]

1.2. Methodology: being in the midst of the practice of commoning

Interviews with the architects involved in the project are central to this study as our aim is to understand how the practice of architecture was involved in the complex processes at NDSM. As researchers, we have been in the exceptional position of being both insiders and observers of the process. One of the authors of this article was involved as an architect in the process of the NDSM transformation, as part of architecture studio De Ruimte in 2000-2004.[2] This kind of involvement in the process enables us to reflect on the experience of the architectural process first-hand, to be in the midst of the practice.[3]

For this article, we have revisited the site regularly in the period 2016-2018, and we have spoken with some of the main initiators of the process, including a number of initial and actual users of the space, and some of the other architects involved in the process of transformation. This study thus relies on these participant's retrospective reflections on their experiences of the process. Crucially, the participants were situated in the place at different times during the transformation process, so their experiences were necessarily different. The varied experiential knowledge

of these different actors is then combined with a thorough analysis of reports, archival images and websites relating to the NDSM site.

It is important to emphasize that this article is not about claiming the role of the architects in a process that is recognized as bottom-up and spontaneous. Instead, it is about understanding and learning from the experience of architect's who were part of the process, not driving it, but contributing their knowledge to a collective process. In the NDSM transformation, the multiple architects involved were in the midst of it, acting in a relational agency with an amalgam of actors and the site itself. [4] Here, architecture was not a practice that resulted in a product, instead it was part of a trajectory "in the making."[5]

In recognition of the large, dynamic collection of actors involved in this process we have combined the situated knowledge of architects who experienced the process, with materials published on NDSM, and voices of initiators, makers and users of the space. It is an ongoing process, which was and continues to be, subject to multiple developmental and commercial pressures. The multi-perspectival nature of our sources is crucial to understanding the complexity of the transformation of the NDSM area of the last twenty years.[6]

1.3. Initiative: entering from the front door

Amsterdam North is a peculiar part of the city, with particular socio-economic dynamics, and its own character and identity. Industrial activity at the NDSM ended in 1984. It became stigmatized as a poor neighborhood populated by immigrants and former labourers from the now defunct shipping industry. "For a long time, the area was home to much that the city of Amsterdam did not want, from medieval gallows field to squatter caravan sites, polluting chemical and shipbuilding industries and a glut of disadvantaged people."[7] It was poorly connected to the rest of the city; even the central station - which initially was designed as the end limit of Amsterdam City- seemed to turn its back to the North.

In the 1990s the former industrial area at the Northern part of the IJ-river in Amsterdam was appropriated by the city's squatting scene. For over forty years squatters had been moving along the Southern banks of the IJ river due to development and rising costs in the city. While these squatted areas were often perceived as dark "underground" parts of the city, they were also sites for the flourishing alternative art scene that lent the city an aura of spontaneity and vibrancy.[8] At the point at which the northern part of the river was squatted, the municipality changed its approach to squatting in the city; many squats were evicted, but at the same time the municipality also started to acknowledge the potential of these underground hubs, and a new policy called "breeding places" was born to support and legalize such initiatives.[9]

It is within this context that an unconventional negotiation began between a group from the squat movement and the municipality.[10] The group of people from the squatting scene approached the NDSM wharf in

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Amsterdam North, but instead of squatting, this time they wanted "to enter from the front door."[11] In 1999, the municipality initiated a competition for *cultural entrepreneurs* to come with proposals for the development of the former ship wharf NDSM. The foundation Kinetisch Noord, which derived from the countercultural scene in Amsterdam, developed an extensive plan to transform the former ship wharf into a vibrant hub for artists, theater makers, skaters and other makers.[12] They collaborated with several architects, who had also been involved in the squatting scene, together they developed the competition plan for the new use of the ship-wharf.[13] They approached the spatial organization as a city within the shell of the ship wharf building, with different zones for the various gradations of publicness. For instance, there was an open framework that would offer space for artist studios in the middle of the building. The plan won the competition and Kinetisch Noord started the process of turning the NDSM wharf into a cultural "Breeding Place" (Figure 1).[14]

2. Levels of Architectural Contribution in the Creation of the Commons
2.1. Commons Avant-la-lettre: Spatiality as Common Knowledge
The collaborative design process of the NDSM wharf can be situated within the emerging theoretical discourse of the "commons." From this perspective, the NDSM can be regarded as a place that draws attention to the *common* dimension of architecture, as a shared language, knowledge, vocabulary and grammar, created, accumulated and enriched in time. In his reflections on the theme of *Common Ground* of the Venice Biennale 2012, curator David Chipperfield, argued for a good architecture that is not only for the privileged; he explained that the theme of *Common Ground* "asks us to think about the physical expression of our collective aspirations and those of the society, and to remind us to consider our shared history, to think about the collaborative nature of architecture and the extraordinary potential of its collective process."[15] Some twelve years before Chipperfield's statement in Venice, the NDSM redevelopment was a project with such a collaborative nature. Thus, the NDSM project pre-dated the use of the term "commons" in architectural debate. The mainstream architectural scene in the Netherlands at the time was more preoccupied with the economic boom and the success of the "Superdutch" architects that gained worldwide fame for their bold architectural statements. In contrast, the NDSM transformation did not involve star-architects, instead they worked with relatively young and unknown architects who had already been involved in several processes to legalize squats in The Hague and Amsterdam. They moved away from a strict client-architect relationship, to a more collaborative practice, in which the architects were participants and co-initiators, and the clients were co-designers. Retrospectively, we can regard this alternative architectural approach as an early manifestation of an architecture of urban commoning.

Figure 1
The NDSM wharf in Amsterdam North. Concrete ramp and the shipwharf building, Photo by Klaske Havik, 2003.

In the NDSM ship wharf, the notion of the commons can be understood in two ways. First, the new use of the site was intended to create a place for people who were already using the site, for makers, artists, immigrants, and newcomers. It was not a place for profit, but a place for communities to thrive. Second, instead of being commissioned by the state or the market, the redevelopment of the NDSM wharf was initiated as a collaborative venture, with complex groups composed of citizens, public and private actors.

The initiating group Kinetisch Noord derived from the *IJ Industrial Buildings Guild,* which brought together communities of artists and squatters who had established their studios in former industrial buildings along the IJ-river in Amsterdam.[16] They proposed, in one of their books "De Stad als Casco" an urban strategy that would leave space for the participation of users as active actors in spatial development projects (Figure 2).[17] The group's previous experience of the repeated process of squatting, eviction, urban cleaning and masterplan development that had happened at the other banks of the IJ river, equipped them with knowledge to negotiate with other parties interested in developing this dilapidated area of the city.[18] A number of the key spatial concepts for the project had already been formulated.[19] Important references were "Support and Infill" theory of John Habraken, the participatory projects experiments of Lucien Kroll, the research of "no plan" and "freedom of the individual" of Yona Friedman.[20] This grounding in architectural knowledge and theory gave Kinetisch Noord confidence in their plan.[21]

These foundational architectural concepts were intensively discussed in both philosophical and spatial terms in a series of workshops, which were organized to further develop the competition proposal in

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Figure 2
Publications of the IJ
Industrial Buildings Guild,
Photo by Mark van den Brink,
with courtesy of Eva
de Klerk.

Figure 3
Moments from the construc-
tion workshops, Photo cour-
tesy of Filip Bosscher.

collaboration with the users (Figure 3). One of the crucial tasks in the early discussions was to incorporate multiple voices in the space-creation process. With the initiators, a diverse collective of architects and thinkers took part in this explorative stage of the development plan. [22] Together with the activists and artists, these architects were part of the collective dream, contributing to its realization in different stages of the process. Their work was influenced by some local architects who advocated alternative ways of doing architecture for communities.[23]

Filip Bosscher, the philosopher-architect who guided the workshops that were to materialize the complex process of space conceptualization, states: "After a while, I realized that my task was

much more how to invent a system of thinking and working in such a way that all the artists would love doing this. We also had a lot of fun, we could work constructively, also make choices and come up with formulation that everyone would agree upon."[24]

The methodology used for the workshops was based on activities identified as observation-association-concept. *Observation* consisted in looking for the qualities present in the building. The rough and monumental aesthetics of the ship wharf was the main starting point. The light, the height, the floor, the rail lines, and the existing structure were all elements to be preserved and appraised. The *association* phase connected these elements of value with aspirations and desires of the group, as well as with artistic and architectural theories. For example, the highest part of the building was a mystical space, referred to as the Cathedral. The *concepts* resulted from merging the qualities of the building with the developed association.[25]

The role of the architectural references was crucial during the workshops. One of the key examples of a project that develops with time was the Ecokathedraal of Louis le Roy in the North of the Netherlands. As a critique of the rigidity of city planning, Le Roy made a new environment by simply constructing piles of stones, giving time and nature the task to create a unique experience. Inspired by this interweaving of the power of art and nature, the group "understood that it was not needed to do that much. It was simply a matter of co-acting."[26] According to Bosscher, this reference also helped to understand that a process like this needs time to come to life organically.

The ideas of the Situationists International, particularly the New Babylon project by the Dutch artist Constant Nieuwenhuys, also served as an example in the early phase of the project.[27] This concept was embraced by the group because it offered a sense of freedom that allowed them to "think of spaces and structures without anyone to be in charge of everything."[28] These collectively shared references also strengthened the idea that there was no need for one single architect "that would design everything." Instead, there was a need for and explicit "common set of rules."[29]

Indeed, having these references in common, the architects agreed that architecture could serve as mediator among multiple voices. This was based on an understanding of architecture that was far removed from the obsession with authorship and branding that dominated Dutch architectural culture around the year 2000. In the case of the NDSM wharf project, the architects were working collectively in various roles, in different parts of the project, which made it difficult to claim authorship. Ideas, visions, references and forms were developed in an organic and collective manner. As participants of the project, the architects were merged in the process and interfused their ideas and inspirations with those of the initiators' group of artists and makers.[30]

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2.2. Commons in the making: materialization of a collective idea

The story of NDSM, its design and realization, is an example of the process of mediating between experimentation, users wishes, architectural ideas and formal and technical requirements. The notion of the commons materializes here as collective human and non-human encounters. The design process was facilitated through *construction workshops* which further explored ways to intervene in space. The program was created in common, dividing the ship wharf in multiple programmatic clusters according to the expected user activities, while leaving some areas open to accommodate future activities. This zoning was not only based on the existing qualities of the building, but also on the different gradations of publicness of the different programs, and the extent to which these would attract varied audiences. Different atmospheres could emerge within the project. The co-generated design, on the one hand, offered room for experimentation and differences, and on the other hand, maintained a bold architectural language. Because of its monumentality and spatial quality, the wharf building played a protagonist role. This way, the wharf entered in relational human-non-human commoning practice. From these encounters the spatial configuration materialized as an example of architectural commons (Figures 4–6).

The *West Wing* of the ship wharf building, *Sectie 4*, was dedicated to youth activities like a Skatepark, a climbing wall, and a music and dance center. In the *North Wing* a square, restaurant and tower for exhibitions and information were imagined. The middle part of the ship wharf building was dedicated to the art village that consisted of a steel frame within which individuals or clusters could build their own space for work. The *East Wing* was dedicated to theater production groups. Other clusters included the former office buildings and some other initiatives on the terrain (Figure 4).

While the NDSM project was shaped largely by users' initiative, the architects involved offered their professional knowledge to guide the project. For instance, architects had the task of translating "the building projects of the users into a building permit application."[31] Alongside the experimental nature of the project, it also had to fit within the existing frame of the building legislation rules and meet requirements regarding safety regulations and other conditions to obtain the necessary building permits. Solutions for fire-safety were developed, such as a grid of fire curtains to divide the building into compartments in case of fire; innovative ideas for the climate in the big ship wharf building included the use of hot water from the central system of the city for the heating system of the ateliers.[32] Although in these aspects the project relied on the professional knowledge of architects, it remained a collective initiative in which people's roles alternated and architects supported and participated in all aspects of the design phrases. At some moments the users drove the design and the architects were supporters, while at other
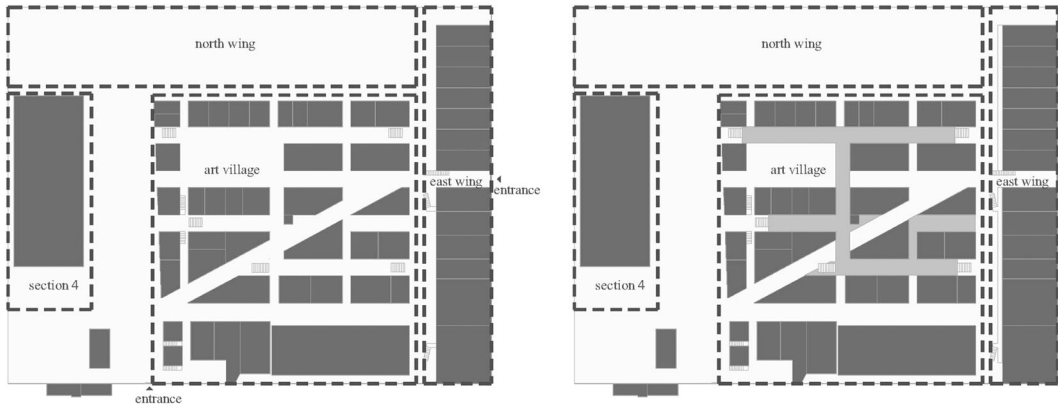
Figure 4
Schematic ground and first floor, Drawing by Dorina Pllumbi, 2018.

Figure 5
Kunststad (Art Village), Photo by Dorina Pllumbi, 2017.

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Figure 6
Pathways second floor
Kunststad (Art Village), Photo
by Dorina Pllumbi, 2017.

moments the architects were more prominently in charge because of technical, planning and legislation requirements. For instance, the design of the middle part of the ship-wharf building, the *Kunststad* (the Art Village) had a high involvement of the users especially in the realization phase.[33]

Many of the spaces embody the concept of commons in their program and design, particularly the middle part of the ship-wharf. Inspired by John Habraken's "support and infill," the Art Village consists of a steel structure that works as a frame, which allows the users to build their ateliers, offices, and workshops (Figure 5). This framework gives space for individual expressions. The Art Village can be seen as the incarnation of the *De Stad Als Casco* method, which sees casco as "a broader notion than just a building structure. It covers all sources of collective agreements that at the same time gives significance to the individual part, the one that the users themselves realize."[34] The *Kunststad* is an expression of a marriage between the collective need to be part of a community, and the individual need to have a personalized space. The collective part, the framework, is designed in common, while the individual part elicits the creativity of the users. Within the construction of the steel structure, the users were free to create their own space (Figure 6). The myriad of different expressions is materialized in the *Kunststad* with each of the cubicles having their own character, while being part of a wider structure that embraces these individualities. All together the units create a collage of juxtaposed materials, colors, compositions, names, provocations. The streets, corresponding to the light sheds of the wharf building, are communal places furnished by sittings, left-over materials, or pieces of artworks on the making. The art village is a place of freedom of material expression (Figure 6).

The skatepark was meant to be part of a larger youth center containing other functions such as music and dance studio's and facilities for climbing.[35] The architects designed the skate park as a platform,

raised 7,5 m above the floor of the ship wharf building, to give space underneath for the other intended functions of the imagined youth center. On that high square, supported by big laminated wooden beams, the skaters, who had the strong desire to build and transform their own skate ramps and routes, had their own domain. On one of the sides of the platform there was a long narrow building. This 70 m long and 3 m wide "Tube" accommodated the skatepark's facilities such as dressing rooms and office, a bar, a first aid room and a workshop space where the skaters could build their wooden ramps. With the open space and the workshop facilities, the skaters were thus offered the possibility to decide on their own the spatial organization of the ramps and other skate objects; it produced a skate-landscape that could change over time. The architects wanted to enable the group of skaters to develop a sense of ownership of the space, to the extent that the skaters felt that they created the skate park themselves. Therefore, the architects made use of relatively neutral cladding material for the side-building to allow the skaters to cover it with graffiti and in this way appropriate the space as their own. Thus, there was a concern to find a balance between providing a strong architectural gesture and enabling the users to design their own space, allowing the level of freedom that the skaters were aiming for (Figures 7 and 8).

The start of the NDSM transformation process was an unconventional moment when it was possible for the municipality (the conventional body of power) and a group of artists and activists coming from the squat movement, to meet somewhere in-between and find new ways to collaborate in making the city. This new momentum activated a willingness to engage in what Bauman would call: to be in the "mood to experiment." [36]

The story of NDSM speaks of the presence of this experimental condition. In Spinozian terms, it is the story of the production of a
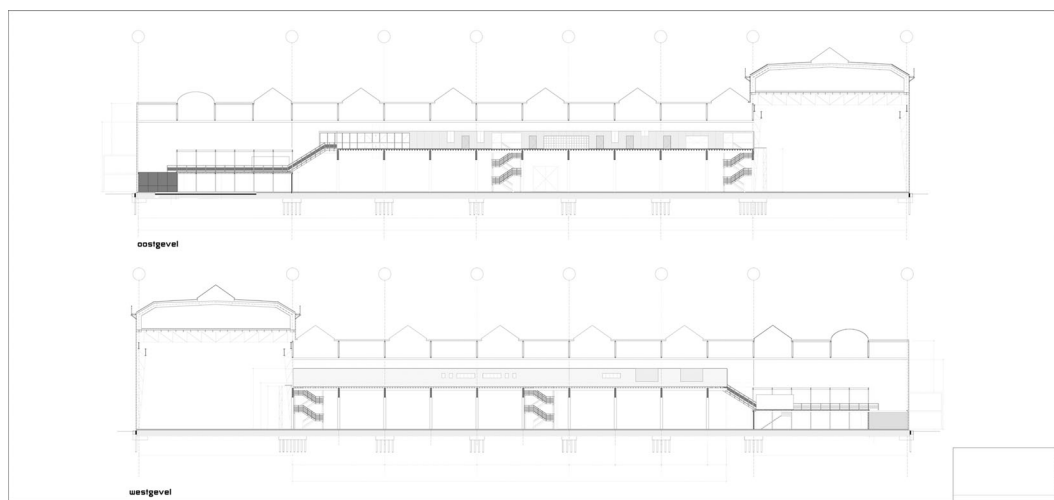

Figure 7
Section Skate park, ©Drawing by Architecture studio de Ruimte.

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Figure 8
Skate park, elevated plat-
form with on left hand side
the "tube", ©photo Jannes
Linders 2005.

collective space through the agency of the power of a *multitude* – ex-
squatters, different users – which was recognized as such by the
sovereign power – the municipality.[37] The NDSM project was neither a
typical capitalist redevelopment of a creative district, nor a typical
instance of anarchist squatting action; it was a process in which diverse
agents of power met and worked together.[38] Such a complex process of
development, which involved the many, with different motives and
incentives, raises the question of how the architects were positioned
within this amalgam of actors? What is their role as "experts" in relation
to activists, in relation to users, and other participants of the
transformation process? How did their position change, compared to the
conventional client-oriented architectural practice?

3. Meeting Differences: Struggles for Space
There is currently a global radical re-thinking of the political and ethical
role of the architectural profession. Discussions about "the right to the
city," which are part of political ideological clashes, are emphasizing the
notion of "the commons."[39] Looking for alternatives beyond the state and
the market, groups of people are experimenting with new forms
of "commoning."

In *Architecture and Participation,* Blundell Jones, Petrescu and Till
discuss the complex politics of participation and the risks and
uncertainty that such processes involve. They point to "the contested
conditions of participatory process, its conflictual possibilities and
unpredictable nature."[40] The NDSM process encountered such conditions
and was characterized by complex processes of negotiation between the
different interest groups and their diverging expectations. From the very

beginning the founders of Kinetisch Noord were aware that the project – which was initially formulated as a temporary project – would become a catalyst for commercialization and commodification of this area in the city. They knew already that "they would be used" to change the character of the area, and they accepted that condition in order to have the support from the municipality.[41] The help and support offered came with a price to be paid.[42] With this awareness in mind the group of initiators of Kinetisch Noord was committed to creating an open community that could accommodate the different interest groups involved in the project. They had to negotiate their freedom, risking that spontaneity and the bottom-up philosophy would suffer from this social assemblage of power and interests.

This negotiation process explains how the NDSM cultural wharf, which started as a temporary project, continues to exist some twenty years after the start of its re-development. The project went through a long process of resistance, clashes of ideologies, struggles for power and pressure of the market. There were different attempts through visions, masterplans and managerial bodies to intervene in the negotiation process.[43]

Initially, Kinetisch Noord were granted a degree of power and freedom to act, which created an illusion of autonomy; then as the project continued there was a gradual shrinking of this autonomy.[44] Despite these limits placed on Kinetisch Noord the commercial and municipal partners did acknowledge and recognize that the presence of the collective could keep alive the spirit and atmosphere of this rough and bohemian area. The spirit of collectivity and openness of NDSM is currently at risk from further development plans. There is a ten-year preservation plan but after that time, the fate of the area is unknown.

At its origin, the redevelopment of NDSM wharf area aspired to create an area of openness, indeterminacy, tolerance, and negotiation. Architecture was the material dimension of this negotiation. Despite the threats it faces, the free and experimental spirit of the early years of NDSM continue to be represented in the open framework of the Art Village and the neutrality of the platform of the skatepark that allows for different uses.

4. Urban Commoning in Practice: Emerging Roles for Architects

Today, the highly debated concept of the commons can be recognized in the spatial and material configuration of the NDSM ship-wharf building. Architecture is often seen as representation of dominant ideologies, but architecture is also capable of resistance. The unconventional process at NDSM thus have consequences for the methods and tools of architecture. In such "commoning" processes, the architect is challenged to find new ways of operating: not as a single author, responding to a clearly defined client, but as a mediator in a complex collaborative process of development. The task of the architect is to respond not only to spatial

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and material, but also to social questions. In order to enter into dialogue with different social groups, architects need to adopt and develop their tools and roles and find a new common language to facilitate the production of space. Commoning offers a different lens with which to look at architecture. Through this lens, architecture is not just a physical entity designed to last, but a process of continuous spatial transformation, which encompasses power struggles and accommodates continuous tensions, diverse ambitions and initiatives. Architecture becomes a *collective situated knowledge*, that is spatially productive. It is this *situatedness* that has the power to co-create a place toward which every participant develops a sense of ownership.

The process of redevelopment of NDSM was an experiment with uncertainties. From the beginning, the powers and roles of different actors were questioned. These roles were unconventional throughout the whole process, as they kept on shifting in time and are still partially unclear today. The process was a challenge and an opportunity to experiment with new ways of using architectural knowledge as part of *commoning processes*. The architectural contribution was part of the process in different levels, in the conceptualization phase, in the co-designing phase and in the technical and co-building phase. This contribution is recognized by the users and the activists, even if never discussed explicitly in reports, documents or articles on NDSM. Existing accounts of the project foreground the passionate involvement of the users to create and "make their own city."[45] However, as we have shown in this text, the users and activists did rely on architectural knowledge in each of the consecutive phases of the process. There was a reciprocal exchange of influence, in which the architects influenced the users and vice-versa; the spatial configuration and its materialization was the medium through which this influence took place.

The first architects involved in the NDSM project were oriented toward facilitating a process: the project was the user's dream materializing in space. The aura of collectiveness that was created and spread around the activism of the group was appealing, and the architects were responding not to one single client, but to a complex multitude of professionals, users and artists that had various wishes and ideas. The architects were thus an active part of the process that included multiple voices, and one of the tasks of the architect was to facilitate these different voices, and to mediate between them. The role of the *architect as a participant* enabled a direct process of collaboration within the group. In these conditions of being participant-architects, the authorship of the project, like the ownership of the place itself, was uncertain and negotiable: the architects were almost anonymous in the publicity around the project, which foregrounded the role of the users.[46]

Today, NDSM is becoming more institutionalized, losing a bit of its spontaneous charm. Meanwhile, a new momentum for the architectural

discipline can be observed. It resonates to the themes that were addressed in the NDSM project. More attention is given to the collective and community architectural practices.[47] Other ways of experimenting with collaborative architectural processes have popped up in Amsterdam North, inspired indeed by the changes which started at the NDSM.[48] From the case of Amsterdam Noord we learn that there can be a moment of acceptance from diverse ideological sides, and that a common language can be developed.

For the architectural domain, it is relevant to see and reflect upon this architectural involvement in a collective process, to see how this experiment with different kinds of architectural practice influenced an alternative way of doing architecture. What emerged clearly from our conversations with activists, users, and architects was that the role of the architectural expertise, and other conventionally established roles, was ambiguous from the very beginning in this experimental process. In a highly complex case like NDSM, there has been frequent and continuous turn over of the people involved, including the architects. Multiple architects were involved at different stages of the process and they played different roles. Their contribution to the project was significant, from the philosophical and theoretical conceptualization of the space that would support and accommodate the ideals of the activists and users; to the facilitation of the design process, and the technical support during the building process. The architectural knowledge was not imposed, but it was merged with the expectations and the aspirations of the groups, for instance through the workshops and discussions in which theories and approaches regarding open building and participatory architecture were shared. Ultimately, the role of the architects was to be a mediator, to create a common language among different actors involved, and to provide basic but characteristic structures upon which users could add their own interventions, be it the walls and doors of their ateliers or the obstacles in the skate park. We can conclude that the case of NDSM shows the emergence of the figure of the *participant-architect*, of a *shared authorship* in the project in the presence of a *collective situated knowledge* produced and productive in the place and for the place.

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Klaske Havik holds the Chair of Methods & Analysis of Architecture at Delft University of Technology the Netherlands. She has developed a distinct research approach relating the experience and use of architecture and urban space to literary language, resulting in her book *Urban Literacy. Reading and Writing Architecture* (2014). Other recent publications include *Architectural Positions: Architecture, Modernity and the Public Sphere* (2009), *Writingplace. Investigations in Architecture and Literature* (2016), and "Writing Atmopsheres," in Charley (ed), *Research Companion to Architecture, Literature and the City* (London: Routledge, 2018). Havik is editor of the architecture journals *OASE*, and *Writingplace*

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journal for Architecture & Literature. As a practicing architect, Havik has been involved in the redevelopment of ship wharf NDSM in Amsterdam. In recent years, Klaske Havik has worked with her students on the topic of the "commons" in Europe as well as in the Latin-American context, teaching studios in Bogotá, Colombia and Valparaíso, Chile.

Dorina Pllumbi is an architect and researcher. She has engaged in teaching and research at the Polytechnic University of Tirana and Sapienza University of Rome. Currently she is affiliated to the chair of Methods and Analysis, Department of Architecture TU Delft, where she is developing her PhD research entitled "*Commonplace in the making: an architectural perspective.*" Through this research she aims to elaborate an architectural perspective on the question of the commons, to explore emerging situations and to reflect upon the limits and potentials that architecture has to engage in urban commoning, through facilitating, initiating or learning from them. Dorina has practiced the architectural profession in several projects in collaboration with other professionals. She is constantly engaged in urban activism.

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Notes

1. Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider, and Jeremy Till, *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2011).
2. As part of architecture studio de Ruimte, Klaske Havik was one of the architects of the Skatepark. In the first phase of the NDSM project, studio de Ruimte consisted of Iris Schutten, Iris de Kievith and Sebastiaan Veldhuisen, who participated in the competition team in 1999. They developed, with Marc Labadie and Kapriool, the proposal for the spatial organization of the ship-wharf and the terrain. In the phase of the skatepark (2001–2004), which was designed by studio de Ruimte, Klaske Havik and Job Nieman, had joined the team.
3. Erin Manning, *The Minor Gesture* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), 1–45.
4. Ibid.
5. Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (New York: Routledge, 2013).
6. Counting from the moment of the competition for cultural entrepreneurship at the NDSM wharf, in 1999.
7. Merijn Oudenampsen, "Amsterdam North: Dream of a Socially Engineered Society," in *Waterfront Visions Transformations in North Amsterdam*, ed. Huib van der Werf, Kate Orff, Merijn Oudenampsen, and Klaske Havik (Amsterdam: NAi Uitgevers, 2009), 27–42.
8. Klaske Havik, "Monotony and Diversity at the IJ-Banks" *Gentrification, Flows and Counter-Flows, OASE* 73 (2009): 129–137.
9. Panu Lehtovuori and Klaske Havik, "Alternative Politics in Urban Innovation," in *Creative Economies, Creative Cities: Asian-European Perspectives*, ed. Justin O'Connor and Lily Kong (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 207–225 explain how in Netherlands, local authorities of several cities have created Breeding Place Policy as a tool to create alliances with creative groups of local sub-cultural scene with the purpose of triggering creative atmospheres in marginal areas of these cities.

10. The movement of countercultural groups from one industrial building to the other as a result of gentrification process that started around the '80s, has been referred to as *IJ in Motion*. These groups were first located at the JAVA and KNSM Island, then they moved towards the western part of the harbor at the Silodam. See also Havik, "Monotony and Diversity at the IJ-Banks," 129–137 (op cit note 8).

11. Eva de Klerk (initiator Kinetisch Noord), in conversation with the authors, November 19, 2015.

12. Kinetisch Noord was initiated by Eva de Klerk, Hessel Dokkum and Jaap Draaisma.

13. Marc Labadie, Architecture studio de Ruimte (Iris Schutten, Iris de Kievith and Sebastiaan Veldhuisen), and Kapriool architects.

14. Milica Topalović, Ana Džokić, and Marc Neelen. *AmsterdamNoord.tmp:Urban Catalyst at Amsterdam Noord* (Amsterdam: Stealth, 2002), is a report that documents temporary urban activities ongoing in several European cities the area during 2002–2003. Amsterdam Noord is one of the case studies pictured in this research called European Research Urban Catalyst. Available Online: http://www.stealth.ultd. net/stealth/projects/03_amsterdamn oord.tmp/download/book_1.pdf. http:// www.stealth.ultd.net/stealth/projects/ 03_amsterdamnoord.tmp/download/ book_2.pdf

15. David Chipperfield, Kieran Long and Shumi Bose, eds., *Common Ground: A Critical Reader* (Venice: Marsilio Editori, 2012). For the 13th International Architecture Exhibition at La Biennale di Venezia, Peter Carl, Pier Vittorio Aureli, Mark Wigley, Teresa Stoppani share this position in this collection of essays.

16. "*The Gilde van Werkgebouwen aan het IJ* (the Guild of Industrial Buildings along the river IJ) was founded in 1993 in reaction to the project *Manhattan aan het IJ*: the large-scale redevelopment of the banks of the IJ by the city of Amsterdam and a consortium of property developers and banks. The founders of the *Gilde* (abbreviation Industrial Buildings Guild) were the former residents and artists from twelve previously squatted buildings on the IJ. Their goal was and is to counteract the cultural depletion of Amsterdam in a constructive way." Extracted from the introduction of the Guild of Industrial Buildings along the river IJ on the website of Eva de Klerk. http://www.evadeklerk.com/en/het-gilde- van-werkgebouwen-aan-het-ij/

17. The group had expressed their ideas in two publications, the international collection of case studies: Bert Hogervorst and Peti Buchel, *Turning Tide: The Users Role in the Redevelopment of Harbour Buildings in North-West Europe/ Het kerend tij, de rol van de gebruiker bij de herontwikkeling van havenpanden in Noord-West Europa* (Amsterdam: The IJ Industrial Buildings Guild, De Appelbloesempers, 1997), and the more local manifesto Podium Werken aan het IJ, *De Stad als Casco: Manifest* (Amsterdam: De Appelbloesempers, 1997).

18. Eva de Klerk, *Make Your City. De Stad Als Caso. The City as a Shell. NDSM-Werf NDSM Shipyard Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: trancityxvaliz, 2017).

19. Some of the concepts were explored already through the active engagement of some of the involved architects in earlier squatting practices in Amsterdam and The Hague. Architects Hein de Haan and Filip Boscher provided the Amsterdam squatting scene with professional input for the re-use of industrial buildings. The architects of De Ruimte were involved in projects in the squatting scene in the Hague and Amsterdam. They had published about their ideas on "open architecture" in: Architecture studio de Ruimte: Iris Schutten, Iris de Kievith, and Sebas Veldhuisen, *Wilder wonen & verder bouwen (EN: Wild Living and Building Further)* (Den Haag: De Ruimte, 1999)

20. N. John Habraken, *Supports: An Alternative to Mass Housing*, 2nd ed. (Urban International Press, 1999). Klaske Havik, and Hans Teerds, "Define and Let Go/An interview with John Habraken*," Productive Uncertainty, Indeterminacy in Spatial Design, Planning and Management, OASE* 85, (2011): 8–16; Yona Friedman and Manuel Orazi,

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*Yona Friedman: The Dilution of
Architecture*, ed. Nader Seraj (Zurich:
Park Books, 2015).

21. Rienke Enghardt, artist involved in the
    designing workshops and building of the
    Kunststad, in conversation with Dorina
    Pllumbi, February 6th, 2018.

22. Participants in these workshops were
    philosopher-architect Filip Bosscher,
    Kapriool Architecten, Architecture studio
    de Ruimte, Marc Labadie and
    Dynamo architects.

23. Hein de Haan, "*Het Belang van
    Woonwerkgebouwen*" (EN: Living and
    Working, Buildings of Importance),
    transcript, Architecture studio de
    Ruimte: Schutten, de Kievith, and
    Veldhuisen, *Wilder wonen & verder
    bouwen (EN: Wild Living and Building
    Further),* 29–33.

24. Filip Bosscher in conversation with
    Dorina Pllumbi, February 23rd, 2018.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid. This point came out also during the
    conversation with Rienke Enghardt. The
    Situationists International were as well a
    strong reference for de Ruimte, who
    published about it in journal *de Omslag*
    at TU Delft during their student years.

28. Filip Bosscher in conversation with
    Dorina Pllumbi, February 23rd, 2018.

29. Ibid.

30. de Klerk, *Make Your City. De Stad Als
    Caso. The City as a Shell. NDSM-Werf
    NDSM Shipyard Amsterdam*.
    Eva de Klerk in conversation with the
    authors, November 19, 2015. De Klerk
    emphasizes that the project was not
    exclusively about art, but about making
    space for craftsman, artisans, skaters,
    besides theatre makers, designers, etc.
    She uses the term "makers" to
    differentiate from Florida's creative
    class discourse. de Klerk, *Make Your
    City. De Stad Als Caso. The City as a
    Shell. NDSM-Werf NDSM
    Shipyard Amsterdam*.

31. de Klerk, *Make Your City. De Stad Als Caso.
    The City as a Shell. NDSM-Werf NDSM
    Shipyard Amsterdam,* 95.

32. Filip Bosscher in conversation with
    Dorina Pllumbi, February 23rd, 2018

explains how these technical solutions
were elaborated by Dynamo architects.

33. The initial plan for the Kunststad was
    already part of the competition entry in
    1999. The design was further elaborated
    in the collective workshops. The
    technical elaboration and realization
    was carried out by Dynamo architects.

34. Carolien Feldbrugge, "*Het
    Werkgebouwengilde*" (EN: Work Building
    Guild), transcript, Architecture studio de
    Ruimte, *Wilder wonen & verder bouwen
    (EN: Wild Living and Continuing to Build)*
    (Den Haag: De Ruimte, 1999), 26–29.

35. The Skate Park was intended to be part
    of a larger intervention "Sectie 4", with
    multiple functions for youth. Design and
    realization were done by Architecture
    studio de Ruimte (Iris Schutten, Iris de
    Kievith, Sebastiaan Veldhuisen, Klaske
    Havik and Job Nieman).

36. Zigmunt Bauman, "*Has Citizenship a
    Future?" Georg Foster Lecture 2014*
    (Mainz: lecture, Johannes Gutenberg
    Universität, June 18, 2014). Bauman
    considers that besides the difficulties,
    there is a "mood to experiment" which
    characterizes the contemporary
    "interregnum" times. Available online:
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=
    elTOYlYp3Vc&feature=youtu.be,
    (accessed February 5, 2018).

37. Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude:
    For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms
    of Life.* (Los Angeles: MIT Press 2009).
    Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri,
    *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age
    of Empire* (New York, CA: The Penguin
    Press, 2004).

38. Egle Mykolaityte, "Renegotiating the
    Countercultural and Entrepreneurial
    Identity" (Mater thesis, University of
    Amsterdam, 2013).

39. David Harvey, "The Right to the City."
    New Left Review 53 (2008): 23–40.

40. Peter Blundel Jones, Doina Petrescu,
    and Jeremy Till, *Architecture and
    Participation* (London/New York: Spon
    Press, 2005).

41. Topalović, Džokić, and Neelen.
    *AmsterdamNoord.tmp:Urban Catalyst at
    Amsterdam Noord*: In an interview with
    Urban Catalyst, de Klerk declared that
    the group knew they were going to be
    used.

Mykolaityte, "Renegotiating the Countercultural and Entrepreneurial Identity," 51: The same was declared by an artist of the initial group: Caspar declared "we knew we were used from the very beginning."

42. Hogervorst, and Buchel, *Turning Tide*. Klaske Havik, "Strength & Vulnerability, Creative Industrial Sites in the Netherlands," *MAJA Architectural* Review no. 2–3 (2005): 58–61.

43. Initiatives like BV Durf, Toekomst NDSM, Panorama Noord, Noord Lonkt! XXL Syndicate, De Vrije Ruimte, were urban visions, masterplans or groups of interest attempting to negotiate the future of NDSM.

44. Kinetisch Noord owns the NDSM ship wharf building but has only 5% of the shares in decision-making for the whole NDSM area, and they face the risk of becoming an isolated enclave in the whole commercial and soon residential character developing now in the area.

45. de Klerk, *Make Your City. De Stad Als Caso. The City as a Shell. NDSM-Werf NDSM Shipyard Amsterdam.*

46. Filip Bosscher in conversation with Dorina Pllumbi, February 23rd, 2018.

47. The last editions of the Venice Biennale have been oriented towards the social aspect of architecture. Especially 15th Biennale "Reporting from the Front" and the actual 16th "Freespace" both are part of a wave that intends to humanize the architectural involvement in the world.

48. Practices like DUS or space&matter have in the core of their philosophy temporality, user's involvement and indeterminacy in design. www. houseofdus.com; www. spaceandmatter.nl

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