

Summer School Zine



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Theatrum Mundi is a centre for research and experimentation in the public culture of cities. We help to expand the crafts of city-making through collaboration with the arts, developing imaginative responses to shared questions about the staging of urban public life. Based in London and Paris, we work through performance, design, publishing, research and teaching with partners across Europe and the Mediterranean.

This zine documents Theatrum Mundi's 2021 Summer School, providing a brief snapshot of the readings, workshops, conversations and ideas that were shared.

The Summer School provides the premise for Theatrum Mundi's Cohort which will be launched in 2022, a new intergenerational and multidisciplinary educational platform for practitioners at different stages of their careers. It will act as both a test-bed to share and discuss current research streams and as a means of generating new ideas that will inform Theatrum Mundi's future programming. The Cohort will be an opportunity to develop a curriculum that proposes new methodologies for peer-to-peer learning and knowledge sharing. This zine forms the first edition of an open-source, work-in-progress educational library, sharing fledgling ideas, unfinished drafts, exploratory methods, and innovative fieldwork.





Participants

Arman Nouri

John Bingham-Hall

Cecily Chua

Jonathan Mills

Christabel Stirling

Labeja Kodua Okullu

Diana Ibáñez López

Lou-Atessa Marcellin

Elahe Karimnia

Marta Michalowska

Gascia Ouzounia

Rebecca Faulkner

Gerard Gormley

Rhona Warwick-Patterson

Hani Salih

Sophie Mackintosh

Jessica Sammut

Susannah Haslam

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Ikebana of the Senses

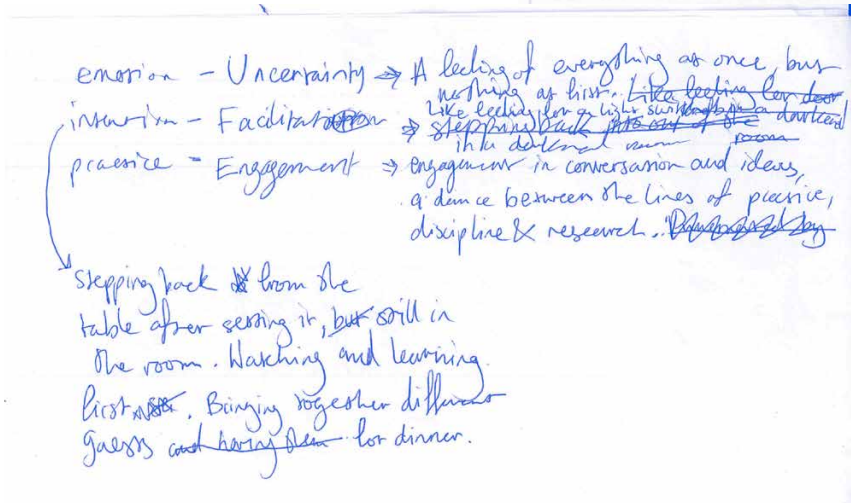
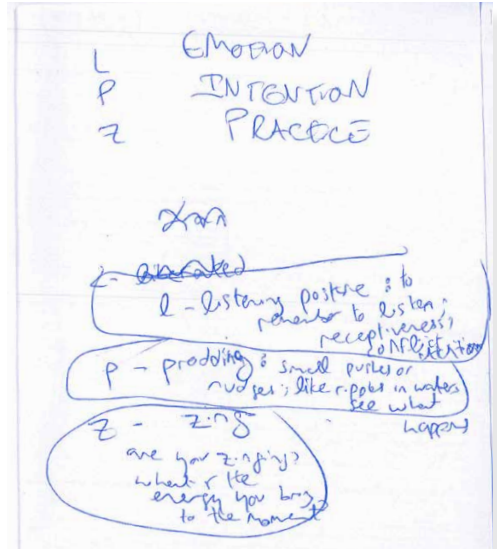
An exercise led by Lou-Atessa Marcellin. Circumventing the stereotypical introduction that focuses on job titles and achievements, participants were asked to create a new lexicon in order to describe themselves and their practice.

Make up your own definition of these words in relation to these categories. This can be written in your mother-tongue and then translated. You can also make up your own term if it doesn't exist.

Exercise 1 Making of an alphabet of the senses

Each participant is given three letters. Thinking about yourself and your practice, write down 3 words starting with the letters you are given that best describe the following:

- An emotion
- Your intention
- Your practice



Emotion

Jaunt - to casually discover, to be a nomad, to be an explorer in every small moment.

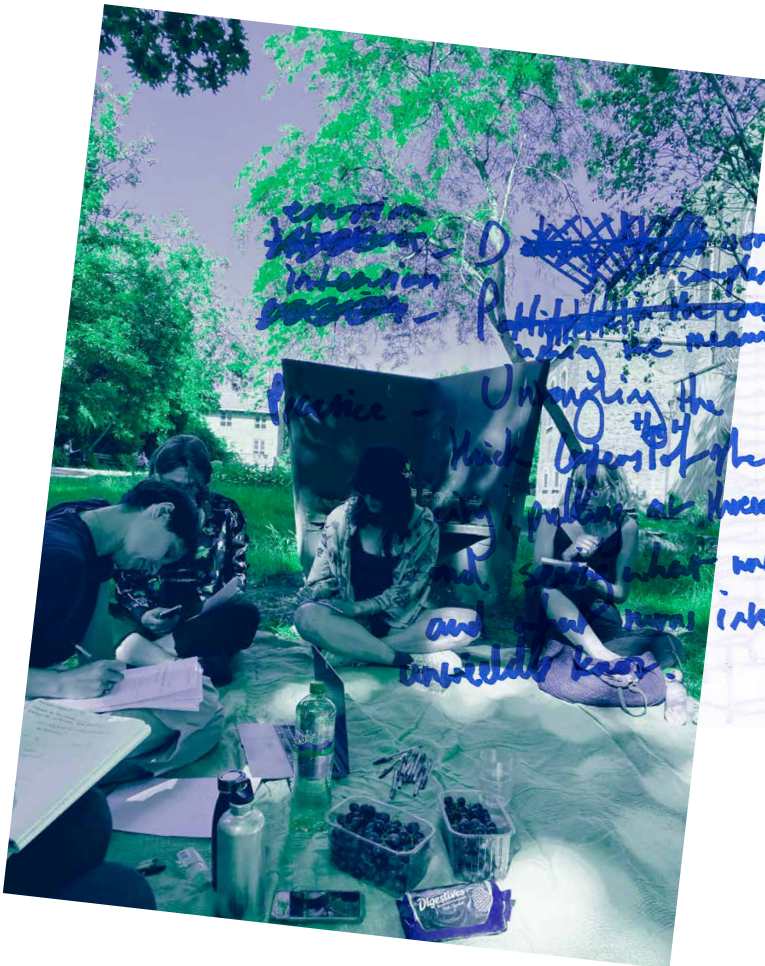
Intention

Overall - to spread itself into the spaces between the sofa and the skirting boards to piece the fragments of hidden spaces into a colour photo.

Practice

Zzzz - to make songs that take sleep for some and prove a lullaby for others.

Labeja Kodua Okullu



Infrastructuring

Theatrum Mundi fellow Susannah Haslam shared her ongoing research project 'Infrastructuring' which considers how infrastructure can be put to work, radically, in and out of cultural institutions. The research has explored how to engage with the infrastructural conditions of cultural institutions, through methods of arrest, intervention, and co-option, in the context of artist Tania Bruguera's 10,146,374 commission at Tate Modern.



Throughout 2020 - 2021, Susannah's research has instigated a series of in-depth discussions with individuals involved with cultural, educational, and arts organisations operating within the UK. Featuring a range of voices including artists, educators, activists, and curators these dialogues seek to examine and critique existing models and subjects to imagine a new framework for a curriculum on cultural infrastructure.

Doing it yourself/together/with others (DIY/T/WO) with Sean Roy Parker retraces an individual experience of how to operate outside of formalised art institutions by creating grassroots support systems of mutual care, asking what it means to do it yourself, together and with others (DIY/T/WO).

Breaking cultural infrastructure with Cecilia Wee considers how to practice equitably within and outside of cultural and educational institutions. It discusses tactics for voicing and defending the rights of underserved communities within large organisations.

Museum cultures with Meneesha Kellay is a meditation on how museums can become actively inclusive through the engagement and participation of communities beyond their immediate networks.

A new cultural institution with John Bingham-Hall and Marta Michalowska reflects on the challenges, duties, and ambitions of a growing organisation to support and create innovative research whilst remaining a peer-led and flexible infrastructure.



Scoring Backstages

Scoring Backstages is a card game developed by Cecily Chua and Elahe Karimnia, created as part of Theatrum Mundi's ongoing research project 'Urban Backstages'. The game seeks to challenge what we define as 'creative workspace' and how we attribute value to such infrastructures. From the Barbican Centre's lobby to a field in rural France, participants were asked to share their own sites of cultural production and assign value to these spaces thinking beyond their physical architectures. Whilst the scoring system remains purposefully subjective and arbitrary, the game sought to encourage new ways of reading and understanding these sites, considering their underlying social, financial, and bureaucratic networks.

Rue Leon Bourgeois	
Affordability	9
Visibility	4
Social connection	8
Design quality	4
Flexibility	7

Maldonado Walk	
Affordability	
Visibility	
Social connection	
Design quality	
Flexibility	





7
3
9
4
7

Pullens Yard

Affordability	6
Visibility	5
Social connection	7
Design quality	8
Flexibility	7

Georgia Pavilion, Moscow
Exhibition of Achievements
of National Economy.

Affordability	7
Visibility	10
Social connection	10
Design quality	7
Flexibility	2

RONCES

Affordability	7/8
Visibility	6
Social connection	10
Design quality	8
Flexibility	10

BARBICAN CENTRE LOBBY

Affordability	6
Visibility	5
Social connection	5
Design quality	9
Flexibility	0

Site Report

Theatrum Mundi fellow Rhona Warwick Paterson presented the methodology behind her upcoming research publication 'Site Report'. The following excerpt is a meditation on the genesis of the project and the exchange of ideas that led to her to explore the domestic realm as a site of cultural production. Rhona is a visual artist, poet and research practitioner whose principle research interests have focused on the contexts and processes of creativity in response to urban space.

Theatrum Mundi's investigation of the Urban Backstage - those often-invisible spaces in which culture is produced idea has fed into my own ongoing reflections on the Domestic realm as a site for imagination. While we started this fellowship just prior to lockdown, the domestic realm has over the last year become a collective focal point for reevaluating our proximity to knowledge production and experience. My research over the past year will culminate in a book work to be titled *Site Report*, a reference to Site writing and excavation of the physic unseen aspects within the domestic realm.

When I was invited by Theatrum Mundi during their month long research in Glasgow to read a poem I'd written for the artist Tessa Lynch. The poem *Tethered* explored the female experience of the derive, and some of the gender issues in psychogeography and the relationship women have to walking in the city.

This idea of the urban backstage really interested me, because at the time it expressed an experience specific to artists in Glasgow following the boom of 'the Glasgow Miracle' coined by Hans Ulrich Obrist in the early 90's. This changed the cultural landscape over a decade, where up till then, artists had enjoyed low studio rents, close proximity to each other, and at that time the GSA was still accessible for working class students, so there was real authentic diversity and supportive collegiate infrastructure and network.

From the mid 90's onwards, Glasgow's success in the international art world, impacted how and where culture was made in the city. This manifested in a wholesale gentrification, masterplanning, branding of the



'merchant city' area where artist-run studios and galleries were located. Businesses were encouraged to move there and were given rebates to do that, however studio rents went up. Many artists, myself included, simply had to relinquish our studios and disperse.

The arts scene in Glasgow in essence had become a stage - the artist's that could afford to keep studios saw them shift from functional spaces into showrooms. Artists became the 'Actors' - studio visits became professionalised/rehearsed. Unresolved experimental work was taken down because gallerists and curators wanted to see finished 'saleable' work in an uncluttered environment. In other words the studio, formally a backstage space, became a stage - a mediated and observed realm. My own practice had to adapt to working from home. No longer could I store old sculptural work or pin images up in the walls and so - I began to write. The context affected the form. The backstage was no longer the autonomy of the studio, the backstage had now entered the domestic territory.

Now, as a new mother at that time, I shirked at the seemingly retrograde shift from 'a room of ones own' to the shared family home; the constant flow of interruption, the melding of life with art, the fragility of art-making exposed the domestic as a threat to tentative experiments. Also the gendered associations of drudgery and home-making seemed to infect my identity. Without the stage of the 'artists' studio, my peers assumed I'd stop making work, I'd become siloed purely because the domestic space did not fit with the cultural expectations of what constituted 'being' an artist.

At the beginning of my fellowship, I saw domestic space as both a somewhat de-activated and benign territory, a space pre loaded with gendered connotations and a space that at all times threatened to consume my imagination.

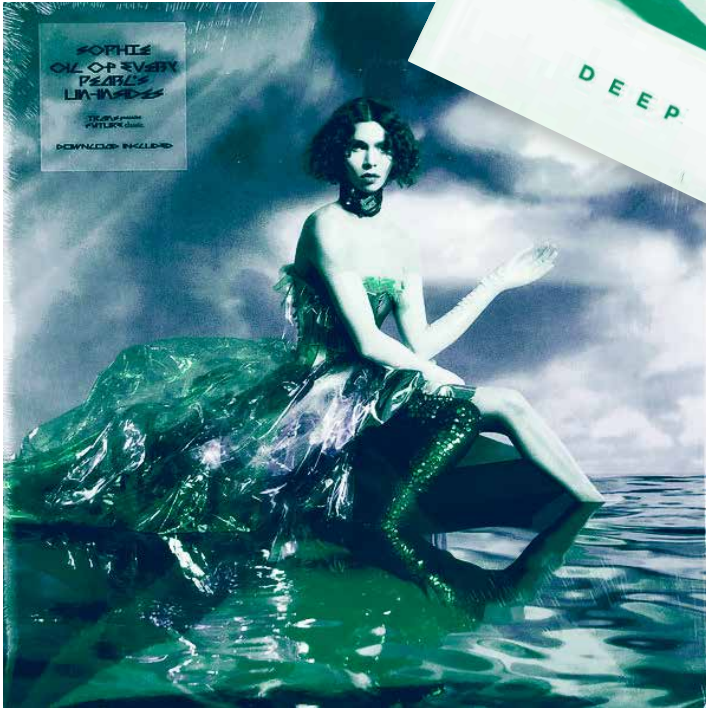
I looked to academia; to feminist theory, anthropology, architectural theory and found these readings distanced, detached and at times dismissive of the home at a site for potential knowledge production. Creativity in the home was handicrafts, or activities aimed predominantly at children.

This background context is really to illustrate where I began when I started Theatrum Mundi fellowship. Once we decided that was an area worthy of investigation, I began asking whether some of those Situationist strategies of detournement could be applied to the domestic space in asking those same questions.

- How do we orient ourselves?
- How can we map experience?
- How do we locate the atmospheric ?
- How can palimpsests reveal new perspectives and narratives?
- What histories do we hold in our habits?
- What constitutes our attachments?

Song and the City

Marta Michalowska and John Bingham Hall shared a selection of music tracks which serve as inspiration for the ideas behind their upcoming publication 'Song and the City'. The book will be published by nai010 in 2022 and will explore the link between oral traditions, storytelling memory and music through a collection of writings. Each track was selected because it evoked its own vignette or story about how music is overheard, performed, shared, shaped or warped by the city and the how certain narratives evolve from these moments.





Song and the City Discussion

- How does the material quality of certain infrastructures and spaces alter how music is performed, composed, and heard?
- Can songs become a repository for memory, evoking places and architectures that have long since been lost?
- Access to the formal types of acoustic infrastructure (concert halls etc) which make certain kinds of music possible is often exclusive - is there untapped potential in disused infrastructural spaces for composition, rehearsal, and performance?
- Songs can be the carriers of multiple layers of meaning and can often embody divergent narratives to different audiences.
- When the history of certain songs is tied up with ideology and censorship listening can become a transgressive act.

- Songs with dance crazes can become a medium to create a collective moment for certain communities, subcultures or can identify specific age groups.
- How has technology, social media, and algorithms altered the way we find and interact with music? Does this process alter the identity and history of certain songs?
- Conversely, are the popularity of platforms like Ticktock and Chop Daily retroactively morphing how new music is composed?
- Explore sampling as a device to give multiple points of view within a single song, or as a way of re-encountering icons and fragments of the city's past.
- Music can also be used to claim or assert dominance over space and create territory. How do you navigate nuisance and noise pollution when dealing with multiple conflicting sonic desires?

Process of Attunements for Multi species

A series of exercises led by Lou-Atessa Marcellin and Marta Michalowska exploring our sensory relationship to the city, focusing on re-attuning our communion with our surroundings and bringing awareness to the multiple species we share space with.



Exercise 1

Chaos/ Order

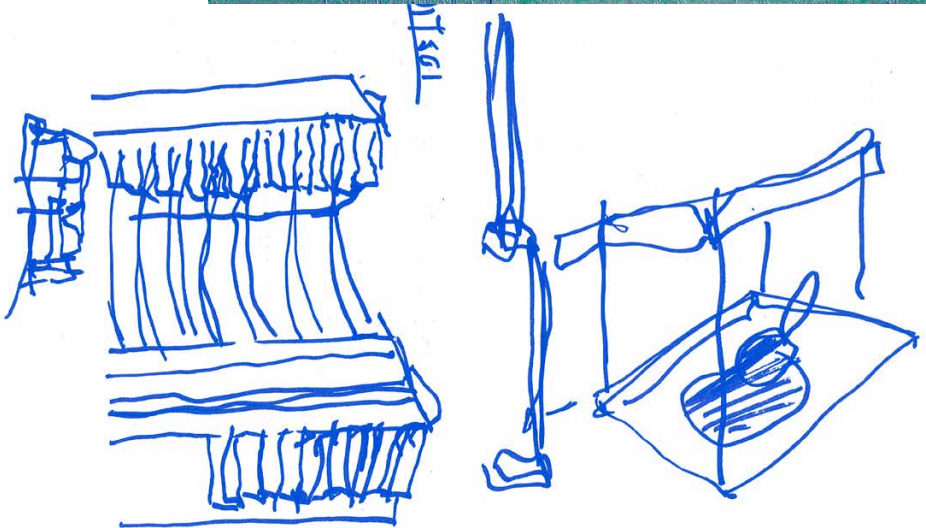
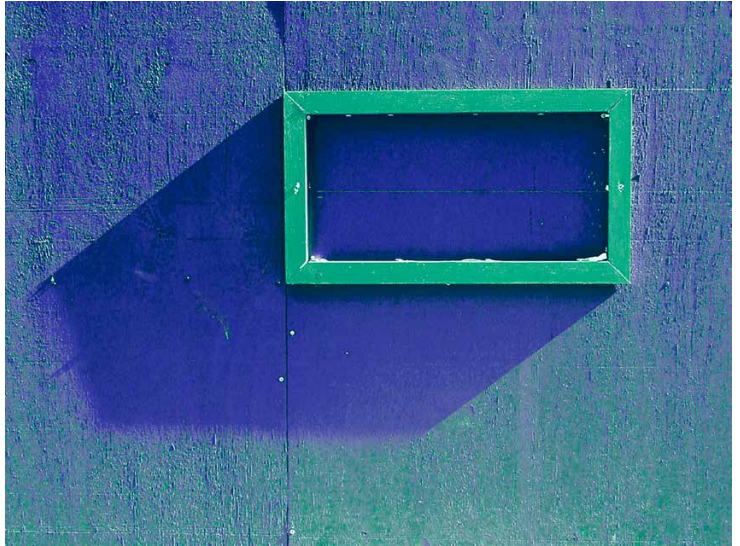
Find and take photographs or 3-4 places that represent chaos and order along the walk and note down how these places/buildings made you feel and what thoughts they prompted – write down your initial responses. Then consider what could have prompted such a response.

Exercise 2

Annotating/Editing cities

Find 3 elements that have been edited or propose edits for a building or city space.

Document your edit or proposed edit (phone - pic- drawing- voice message)



Exercise 3

Listening/Sounds

In any urban setting

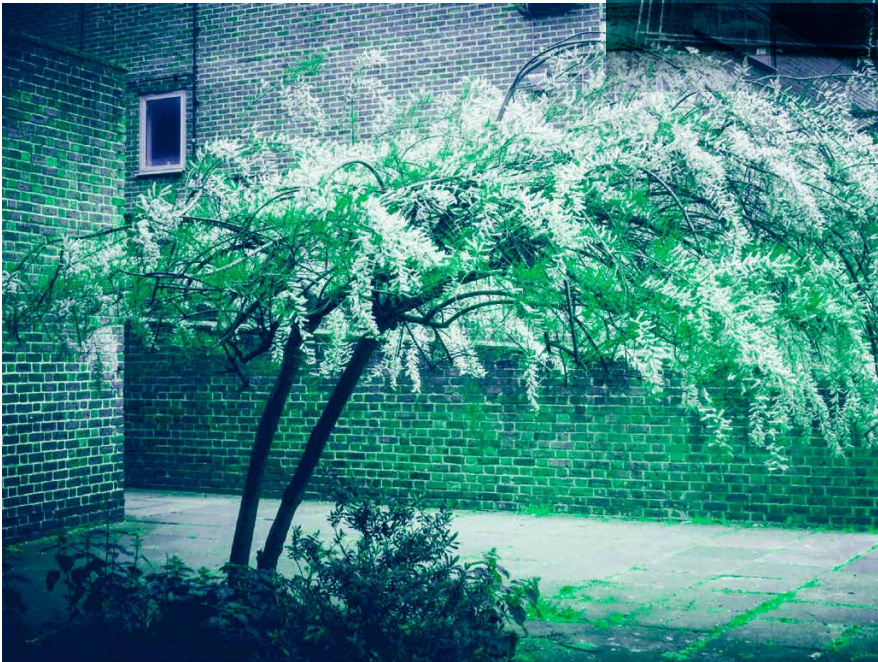
Become aware of any sound

Become aware of any vibration

Is it disturbing, uncanny, and annoying?

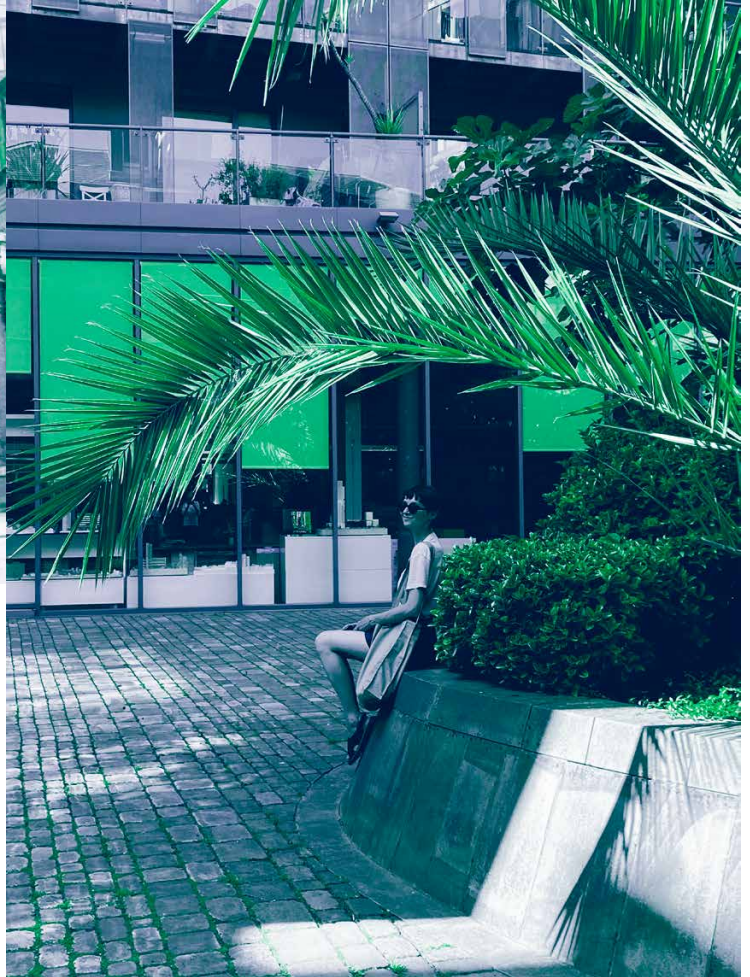


Is it harmonious, soothing, and peaceful?



Regardless of how you categorise these sounds

Regardless of how you categorise these vibrations



Listen to them all as if they were your favorite piece of music

Wild City

Author Sophie Mackintosh gave a reading of 'Wild City' a short story commissioned by Theatrum Mundi as part of 'Concrete and Ink' the first volume in a new series offering alternative modes through which to narrate the future of urban development. Sophie is a British novelist and short story writer.

These quotes are excerpts from *Wild City*. To read the full story, *Concrete and Ink* is available from our online shop:

<https://theatrum-mundi.org/shop/>

"My supervisor called me in for a meeting to brief me the day before we were due to go to the wild city. She was going to come with me, having been on trips there before, but not for some time. I just want you to understand what we are dealing with, she said. She seemed a little off, her fingernails picking at the laminated cover of her notebook where it was peeling. It was late afternoon, when the smog peaked, and the heat made it worse. The sweaty collar of my shirt rubbed at my throat."





“Beyond the ring of trees, the tower blocks like the one I had grown up in gave the first clue to the new rules we were in, aside from the lack of cars. Greenery flourished from the broken windows, vines curling all the way down the sides. Long grass and smaller trees grew at the base. Nobody lives here any more, the supervisor told me. I was transported back to childhood, as if the plants we had nurtured had sprung out and down, dripping along the sides.”



A large graphic element on the right side of the page. It features a bright green, tilted rectangular background. Overlaid on this background are three large, white, stylized letters: a 'W' at the top, a 'Z' at the bottom left, and a 'D' at the bottom right. The letters are thick and blocky, with a slightly irregular, hand-drawn feel. A small white letter 'S' is partially visible at the bottom right corner of the green area.

“I walked like that through the wild city in the first days. A mantra in my head: the dreams brought me here, the dreams call me back. The sky was navy and pink. Already the thought of leaving made me feel panicked. There was a darkening resentment too. Why show me this and then take it away? I was in what felt like pre-emptive mourning, and it was confusing to me, because I had just arrived, and I knew I was only here temporarily, to learn and then to go back.”

CITY Y

Sophie Mackintosh

"It makes me feel strange, my supervisor said at the end of each day, as we sorted our notes before the sun went down and we joined a little fire or made our own, before sleeping early. I could agree with her that there were moments of uncanniness in seeing former shopping centres overgrown and ransacked, deer skittering around fountains, in how abandoned cars were just skeletons in the grass. But I saw beauty in it too, where she didn't. Everything."



TM Editions

TM Editions is Theatrum Mundi's publishing platform, set up to explore notions of the city through different practices, perspectives and cultures, focusing on the role storytelling plays in our urban imaginaries. Each edition comprises a mix of essays, articles, conversations and fieldwork with the aim of documenting and sharing Theatrum Mundi's emerging research connecting architecture and urbanism with the crafts of the stage.

All titles are available individually from our online shop <https://theatrum-mundi.org/shop/>

We release quarterly printed research publications and annual long form books, and all our titles are sold at a not for profit price.

More publications by TM:

- Sonic Urbanism: Resonances in a New Field
- Sonic Urbanism: the Political Voice
- Concrete and Ink: Storytelling and the Future of Architecture
- Interior Realms

Embodying Otherness



Embodying Otherness explores the presence, stillness and movement of bodies in the city, and the ways they are constantly restricted, codified and practiced. How can we challenge codes embedded in urban design which limit our right to be and move in the city? And how can we accommodate future changes by navigating the unknown and imagining alternative realities?

Edited by Elahe Karimnia and Fani Kostourou

London, 2021
Paperback, 2 colours
115x201mm, 80pp

C'est un chantier en course
It's always a work in progress

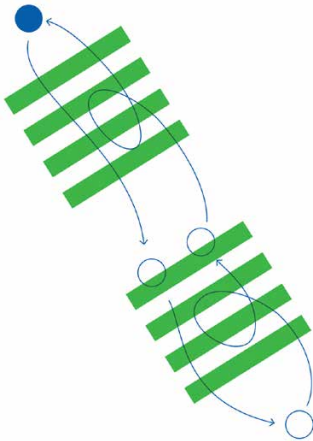


Edited by Elahe Karimnia and Justinien Tribillon

On the edge, at the periphery. The cities we've paired for this urbanists' exchange embody the limits, inherent prejudices, and clichés of these hackneyed metaphors. Documenting sites of cultural production in Marseilles and Glasgow, this publication explores how those that run these spaces can learn from one another, and develop new strategies and solidarities.

London, 2021
Paper Back, 2 colours
115x201 mm, 72pp

Performing Projections



Edited by Cecily Chua and Jayden Ali

Performing Projections is centred around one fundamental question: Can performance-making be a craft for architectural thinking? Combining the voices of students, educators, and practitioners, it explores how the techniques of scoring, staging, and improvising can be used to raise provocative questions about who has the right to access, occupy, and remake our urban environments.

London, 2021
Paper Back, Full colour
115x201 mm, 80pp

Membership

Theatrum Mundi Membership is open to everyone looking to expand their approach to city-making and explore its intersections with culture, politics and performance. Four research publications as well as an annual book will be sent to each member every year. Members will be part of a network of practitioners and scholars approaching cities and city-making from new perspectives.

Invitations to workshops, discounted access to public events and an annual social gathering are also included. Those who join our friends scheme will help keep our research independent and accessible to all.

Join now to receive our first book *Interior Realms*, plus 4 editions.

<https://theatrum-mundi.org/membership/>

Individual Membership £40 per year [£25 for Students + under 26]

- 4 TM Editions per year
- 1 TM Book per year
- 50% on tickets for public events
- Invitations for workshops
- Annual Members' Social

Friends of Theatrum Mundi £150 per year

- 4 TM Editions per year
- 1 TM Book per year
- 50% on tickets for public events for up to 4 people
- Invitations for workshops for up to 4 people
- Annual Members' Social for up to 4 people
- Name published as a supporter in Editions

This Summer School was organised and run by Theatrum Mundi's Lou-Atessa Marcellin and Marta Michalowska.

The Summer School Zine was designed and edited by Cecily Chua and Lou-Atessa Marcellin.

Thanks to Amin Taha and Groupwork for hosting the Summer School and to all who participated:

Arman Nouri
Cecily Chua
Christabel Stirling
Diana Ibáñez López
Elahe Karimnia
Gascia Ouzounia
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