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## Conflict, Space and Architecture

### Introduction

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## Introduction

# Conflict, Space and Architecture

Marc Schoonderbeek and Malkit Shoshan

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The world is at war again.

(Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude*)<sup>1</sup>

While starting to formulate the first ideas for this *Footprint* issue on the ‘Spaces of Conflict’, moments of crisis and emergent realities of conflict in the world were already catching up with us with great intensity and diversity. But when writing this introduction, we were, and still are witnessing an additional rapid escalation in violence, transitions in world powers, and sequences of unprecedented global shocks. The continuous wars in the Middle East and Africa, combined with the collisions of climate change, deforestation, extraction and inequitable financial systems result in a record-breaking numbers of displaced populations, spilling over through regions and continents. This reality is mirrored in the political and spatial structures in the US, South America and Europe, such as the rising popular support in the Alt-Right, and the erection of walls between the wealthy and the poor. As our world becomes increasingly divided into polar and non-symmetrical realities – shrinking groups of the wealthy and expanding groups of the poor; the ruthlessly exploiting versus those who are exploited and expelled – so do the physical apparatuses of separation evolve. These trends of violence and segregation evidently manifest themselves in the way we organise and design, but also think and theorise, our surroundings.

Clearly, the terrorist attacks at the start of the twenty-first century had already catapulted the

issue of space and conflict into the city and to the forefront of architectural debates. As a result, existing and newly emerging national, religious and ethnic conflicts and their relation to urban space and the built environment became a focus of attention in architecture. While military thinking already had a long-standing tradition in architectural history, the sudden emergence of new spaces of conflict considerably altered architectural discourse as extreme conditions of war, militarisation, climate change as well as the economic crisis were (and still are) threatening to structurally reconfigure our living environments. More than a decade later, these urban intrusions seem to have produced a diversified field of both thinking and action in architecture, as the theories of spatial conflicts have started to incorporate a wide variety of reflections from other disciplines while architectural practices have shown a remarkable adequacy in addressing spaces of conflict, crisis, and disaster.

This issue of *Footprint* intends to report on this state of perpetual global unrest in architecture through a series of academic articles and case studies that highlight the consequences of conflicts in the places and spaces that we inhabit. In this introduction, we wish to look at these issues as an interlinked global reality rather than as isolated incidents. In doing so, we seek to position ‘Spaces of Conflict’ in the context of emerging global trends, conditions, and discourses in the attempt to address their indicative symptoms while reflecting on their underlying causes.

### **Militarised cities**

The direct, consequential result of the emergence of global terrorism has undoubtedly been the militarisation of space. Founded on the conviction that increased security is to the benefit of all citizens, public, semi-public as well as private space have become increasingly scanned, controlled and subject to other forms of surveillance that intrude visibly and mostly invisibly in the lives and homes of just about everyone. The city being 'under siege' can thus be interpreted in more than one way: the constant threat of terrorist attacks, the presence of these threats through counter-terrorist measures, but the result of these developments is also that the city has become the potential battleground for political violence, as the democratic nature of urban space has decreased, and the control of citizens has unprecedentedly increased.<sup>2</sup> The architecture of security renders space defensible but also global,<sup>3</sup> as the 'violent geographies' can nowadays be traced at any place on the globe.<sup>4</sup> As this new reality rapidly unfolded, initiatives to resolve conflicts or to establish peace have resulted in spatial processes of transformation that have affected the urban fabric profoundly. While the legacies of older wars are yet to be resolved, the physical manifestations of the twenty-first century conflicts are becoming part of everyday life in cities all over the world and turning the urban space into the new theatre of war.

The Berlin Wall, for instance, which constituted the emblematic reminiscence of the Cold War and of the diminishing conflicts of the twentieth century, has been physically removed almost overnight, but its non-physical traces have remained traceable to this very day. Similarly in Belfast, the peace process has started a process of reconciliation, but the physical remains are disappearing only slowly, producing rather idiosyncratic spatial conditions. Reflecting on the intended policy to remove all 'interface barriers' in Northern Ireland, James O'Leary presents in this issue an enumeration of possible understandings of

the term 'interface', which allows for a gathering of all barriers constructed in Belfast to secure separation and the spatial limitation of conflict as one complete and indiscriminate system. Treating the Belfast Peace Walls and other obstacles as interfaces in the urban fabric, O'Leary suggests that the nature of the interface system is all-encompassing and thus moves architecture beyond the realm of the strictly spatial and the material, and into the realm of the psychological and virtual. In eight photographs, the intrinsic characteristics of these interfaces are made explicit, via a wide variety of colour palettes, messages inscribed and iconographic information and references depicted.

Referring to a similarly 'old' and lingering conflict in her contribution, Yael Allweil discusses the transition in Israeli settler policies from a movement that intended to secure an extended territorial 'home' into a movement that used housing for military purposes, a 'violence by the home'. Offering an historical account of the origins of the settler movement of the West Bank, Allweil shows how initial settlements were still intrinsically tied to the Israeli Defence Force military camps that controlled the newly occupied territory, while later on, i.e. after Begin won the elections in 1977, the settlement of the West Bank became government policy. Since Begin restricted this development as a strictly military, rather than a civilian settlement, all settlements were always intended to be temporary in nature. Allweil argues that the settler movement initially was a civilian occupation movement directed against the State and the military seeking permanent settlement of the 'historical homeland', and only later became a movement of military occupation directed against the Palestinians. The examples of Sebastia, Kedum, Elon-More and Gush Emunim are used to substantiate this claim: these kibbutz-type settlements were all originally constructed with mobile homes. The early 1990s are indicated by Allweil as the historical turning point with respect to settlement

as an internal civilian claim on military land, towards a military strategy to claim occupied land. The option of the 'Two-State Solution', in which the West Bank would no longer be part of Israel, transformed the purpose of the settlements to a military strategy to create as much 'facts on the ground' as possible, thus rendering the two-state option a 'solution' beyond factual reach. Mizpe-Yishai is but one example of the more recent settlements that were used as civilian occupation and as an obstruction to the Oslo peace agreements. Allweil additionally argues that the original state policy to provide housing as shelter has been transferred to the occupied territories with the opening up of the housing market to neo-liberal strategies. Also within this strange turn of policies, where only on the West Bank one would nowadays be able to obtain (affordable) housing provided by the government, the housing policy has been compromised into a violent act aimed at increasing the conflict.

### **The post-colonial condition, migration and refugees**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, and increasingly after the terrorist attacks of the beginning of the twenty-first century, we have witnessed the emergence of a new world order.<sup>5</sup> The international boundaries and the legacy of state formation of the twentieth century were challenged by processes of globalisation, but also by internal divides. Wars between nations turned into internationalised internal conflicts and sectarian violence that ravaged cities and amplified national divides. These trends resulted in the emergence of ethno-territorial boundaries inside countries, cities and residential areas.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, in recent years, we have witnessed the collapse of nation states in the Middle East and Africa. The atrocities of the civil war in Syria have caused millions of Syrians to seek shelter in other countries. In 2015, about one million people tried to cross the Mediterranean Sea crossing from North Africa to Italy and from Syria to

Greece.<sup>7</sup> But one must not uncritically assess these recent dramatic developments, as they undoubtedly have been a long time in the making. As in previous cases, this crisis too has had a longer history than is often acknowledged. Several scholars have pointed out what they consider to be at least one of the origins of contemporary conflicts, namely in the colonial histories and subsequent post-colonial formation of nation-states, which were often organised without any specific attention to tribal histories, established rights, ethnic and religious diversity and other crucial distinctions between the groups that were to form the very constituencies of these states.<sup>8</sup> At least part of the current spaces of conflict have come out of these forced and not very well elaborated national constitutions, which in a lot of cases have been shattered by cultivated and equally forced strategies of hatred and segregation.

In this light, the argument Samia Henni presents in this issue warrants attention, as she discusses the principles of the 'guerre moderne' (modern war) as it was enacted by the French army in Algeria between 1954 and 1962. After declaring a 'state of emergency' (Algeria was, after-all, a French colony), the Algerian uprising was initially met with great aggression by the French authorities, though its actions were formulated and employed with the specific restriction that the establishment of detention camps would not be allowed. In effect, the French authorities counter-acted the Algerian revolution with an attempt to pacify the local population, rather than to establish a peaceful society. The state of emergency was intended to somehow involve the Algerian population in a process of social (re-) building through humanitarian, constructive and protective actions, but also caused a rather far-reaching reorganisation of the Algerian territory. As it turns out, the Algerian war, as it is now commonly understood, is an example of the shift between conventional and unconventional warfare, absorbing the post-colonial and post-second-World-War

realities into a contemporary strategy of warfare. In Algeria, the entire population became suspect and the object of security and surveillance measures. The actions of the French military thus marked the first time that systematic torture and total warfare on local populations were developed, implemented and employed. Rather than detaining people, the French started a massive operation of resettlement that completely transformed the Algerian landscape. Henni shows how in the end the relocation settlements simply turned out to be camps, though the French army itself considered this resettlement the 'masterpiece' in its entire pacification process. After De Gaulle reclaimed power in France in 1959 and reports in the French press about the appalling living conditions in the camps caused a scandal, the settlements became part of a more socially oriented plan. They were re-assessed as rural settlements, though their military strategic nature seldomly subsided. But even in this period, according to Henni, the modern warfare conducted by the French army in Algeria remains one of the most violent of recent, 'modern' wars.

Displacement, relocation and camps have become intrinsically part of any contemporary conflict, though the treatment of displacement and the design of camps are constantly reconsidered and reassessed. As war increasingly becomes a general and perpetual phenomenon, so are spaces of conflict and spaces of exception.<sup>9</sup> The Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan is one of these phenomenal sites. Nada Maani discusses this refugee camp, which houses 80,000 displaced persons, here. In its scale and socio-economic complexity, the Zaatari camp operates more like a spontaneous urban space than a camp. Maani offers an intervention proposal for the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan and argues that it is much more appropriate to provide a sense of belonging in these situations of displacement. The fact that a refugee camp tends to remain in place longer than initially anticipated, should lead to a policy, Maani contends, that turns them into

more permanent settings as opposed to temporary ones from the start. The research and proposed intervention proposal by Maani takes the specifics of the current situation of the camp as well as the cultural background of its users into consideration. The stratification of public space, needed to ensure the proper presence of women and children, make up the basic ideas for the proposal.

### **The Anthropocene and the planetary condition**

The combination of war and terrorism as well as global economical asymmetries have indeed led to an unprecedented number of displaced persons around the world in this decade, but our claim is (unfortunately) not limited to these developments. Transformations within the earth's ecological system have recently started to constitute a genuine crisis of its own, including the consequential forms of displacement with the first acknowledged groups of 'ecological refugees' having fallen victim to the results of climate change and the industrialised process of natural extractions. Last year, UNHCR recorded over 65 million forced displaced persons due to war and violent conflicts, but the additional number of global migratory movements due to industrialisation, drought, deforestation, famine and simply flooding have remained rather mute. Processes of land acquisition and catastrophic shocks due to climate change continue to hit the poorest areas in the Global South and result in over 800 million undocumented displaced persons. These are mostly rural migrants who are moving to slums, while their villages are left destroyed behind.<sup>10</sup> These new trends of displacement increase the pressure on cities, not only in the Global South but also form one of the reasons migratory movements have started to continuously pressure the north.

The impact of globalisation on people's lives, be it in Africa, Asia, the US, or Europe, have reached a point of no return, such is the scale and speed of exploitation of all land resources and extraction of all material resources that are inevitably

exhausting the planet and already disrupting the lives of millions.<sup>11</sup> This has, by now, been commonly understood as the dawn of the human-influenced age, the Anthropocene. This 'new age' of human-influenced geology has been dated to the 1950s: after 12,000 years of a reasonably stable ecological and natural global system, scientists have started to claim that since the mid-twentieth century the earth is so profoundly changed due to human intervention and cultivation that the transformation of land by deforestation and industrial development, with its negative effects in terms of carbon dioxide emissions, sea level rise, and the global mass extinction of species, mark the end of the previous part of geological time. Thus, the Holocene has given way to the Anthropocene,<sup>12</sup> but the consequences of this human era of geological time, and whether the end of the world is inevitable or not, have yet to be spelled out.<sup>13</sup> As it turns out, global, regional and local conflicts, which are, among others, the result of a failing system of governance, a lack of equity and equality, seem to be amplified by climate change. The growing divide between socio-economic and cultural groups in society has an immense impact on the shaping of the built environment.

### **Dead Land and extrastatecraft**

The issues thus far discussed, i.e. conflict, militarised space, migration, post-colonialism and the ecological crisis, can be considered to belong to the more 'obvious' examples, however contemporary, of spaces of conflict. Though important and even essential to mention and discuss, our initial aim for this *Footprint* issue was to focus on these examples but to incorporate the more recent roles of architecture in the contemporary spaces of conflict as well. More ambitiously, we had hoped for a trajectory in this debate that was unexpected and, perhaps, capable of opening new and even hopeful perspectives, ones that would lead to a new theorisation of the space of conflict that would not necessarily confirm the current status quo but open the debate to some fundamentally different takes

on the very need for this kind of space in contemporary discourse. Therefore, within this issue and departing from a spatial understanding of geopolitical, climatological and economical conflicts, we sought to introduce and add to the professional discourse new conditions, experimental spaces and innovative practices that could be theorised accordingly. Focusing on 'conflict', we were additionally interested in contributions that highlight the large scale and phenomenal transitions in the physical world and in society by extrapolating, through examples, the abundance of relations that can be traced between conflict, territory and architecture. The ensuing discussion in this introduction, including the adjacent articles published in this issue, will focus on these more recent roles of architecture in contemporary spaces of conflict.

Several recent discussions in architectural discourse can be linked to these important issues. Saskia Sassen, for instance, has shown that, from 2006 to 2011, more than 200 million hectares of land have been bought by foreign governments and private firms in Africa and South America, investing in mining and industrialised crops and food production. Sassen introduced the term 'Dead Land' to describe the ground that is left behind by these mega global operations. Large stretches of land and water are left, overwhelmed by relentless use of chemicals, lack of oxygen and pollution. Many of these destructions have increasingly been hitting poor communities recently, but in fact nobody seems to be able to escape the consequences of climate change on the environment.<sup>14</sup> Comparably, Keller Easterling has argued for the emergence of an infrastructure space based on the economical politics of the extrastate, where content is no longer made but made possible, dictated by the logic of information technology and the financial models of neo-liberalism.<sup>15</sup> The cartographic gaze, another crucial tool brought to full potential in European colonialism, has been the pre-emptive instrument with which the global order has been laid out,

anticipated and ultimately controlled from the outset in its mapping practices.<sup>16</sup>

### **Spaces of post-conflict**

The European response to the two crises hitting its territory over the last two decades, namely the threat of global terrorism and the influx of refugees, might have presented a unique chance to come to terms with its own colonial past. Its response, however, has been caught between the extremes that must have come out of its historical legacy and its subsequent suppressed guilt: the humanitarian side of the age of Enlightenment and Humanism; the historical 'confessions' of its atrocities committed in the name of Christianity and Colonialism; and the insight that the continent had seen the emergence of pogroms, nationalism, fascism and Nazism. But instead of seeing the refugee crisis as a challenge at redefining itself, the European reflex has been to simply consider the insurgence of refugee masses as a threat (of its wealth, security, stability, what have you).<sup>17</sup> Instead of taking as its basis the shared substance of our social being, Europe is doing the opposite (with the somewhat ironical but genuine exception of Merkel's Germany).<sup>18</sup> It has thus used multiple measures to fortify its borders, with financial and political actions being followed by the erection of physical walls, the militarisation of borders, and the introduction of global high-tech surveillance systems that target both the displaced and its own citizens (Hungary and, more recently, Poland). By doing so, Europe diverts much of this accumulating pressure to third party countries that have no choice but contain the forced displaced population (Turkey, Jordan and Greece) and increases the stress on their own population.

Where should we position architecture in all this? As stated, our original intent was to additionally focus on the spatial consequences of conflict, interested as we were in clarifying the intrinsic relationships that can be traced between theory and practice.

Conflict areas often prove to be fertile grounds for innovation and for the emergence of new spatial forms. In their extremity, conflicts often serve as an intensified example for spatial processes that happen elsewhere, both in our cities, territories and landscapes. The ongoing condition of crisis has allowed for the emergence of all sorts of speculative scenarios, and simultaneously given rise to the emergence of new discursive takes on spaces of resilience and new understandings of space. The contemporary spaces emerging out of post-conflict situations were therefore part of this intent. Daniel Tan's case study in this issue falls within this scope. He investigates Vatican City as a space of increased control and the contradictory tensions that have emerged as a result of this. The spectacle, which initiates and creates mass gatherings, has become a perfect target for terrorism, especially when the spectacle is enacted within the condensed spaces of the contemporary city. Originally intended as a space of gathering, with open borders, St. Peter's square of Vatican City has become an increasingly securitised space where the role of architecture is increasingly diminished in favour of the important role security experts play in the spatial lay-out of public space. Tan raises the rather important question how architecture can ensure that fear does not entirely overtake the nature of public urban spaces due to restrictive security measures.

Fabiano Micocci presents another post-conflict example with the 'inclusive urban strategy and action plan' for two neighbourhoods in Tripoli (Lebanon), an exemplary case in which multi-disciplinary post-war regeneration processes have resulted in a more balanced way of urban development after the destruction caused by conflict. Pleading for a two-sided approach, one in which architects do not only address the physical rebuilding of the urban tissue, but also take the traumas and psychological effects into consideration, post-war rebuilding is presented as a holistic process. The author claims

that this approach is a divergence from more classical procedures as it incorporates critical, social, cultural, ethnic, religious, psychological as well as physical aspects of post-conflict regeneration. This new(er) approach is necessary as the nature of the conflicts have changed considerably: often non-state diffused parties are involved and the space in which the conflict was enacted is hardly transparent and mostly urban. The effects for local populations are therefore far-reaching, meaning tangible goals have to be set. Tripoli is a particularly difficult case, if only through the sheer complexity of different forms of post-conflict situations. The more recent influx of refugees from the Syrian war has had serious ramifications on an already delicately (dis-)balanced conflict situation. Given the complexity of the holistic approach, the rebuilding of two neighbourhoods in Tripoli was separated in a diagnostic phase and a phase of strategy planning. The ensuing action plan resulted in a proposal for three levels of intervention through scenarios. Rather than focusing primarily on the economic aspect of rebuilding processes, the scenarios aim to establish community relationships along a broad spectrum of possibilities, namely through the insertion of 'urban armature' to ensure lively urban spaces; economical ('functional') relationships of these public spaces with the local community and participatory engagement of the local community through initiatives and events which were intended as acts of 'placemaking'.

Killian Doherty, to conclude the post-conflict discussion, offers an insight into the presence of conflict within the landscape of contemporary, post-war Rwanda. In Rwanda, both power and social rank have traditionally been territorially determined, as the agronomists were able to secure access to resources, while the hunter-gatherer communities were less able to do so. Doherty sketches strategies that can start addressing the current suppression enacted upon the Twa minority. This strategy aims at taking, on the one hand, the non-economic

aspects of the Twa's ongoing discrimination into account while, on the other, allowing for the dual understanding of dwelling for the Twa, namely one that fluctuates between the contested and restricted boundaries of suppressed dwelling and a habitation that is based on the borderless space of the stretched-out forested territory.

### **The agonistic model**

Recent discussions in philosophy and political theory have also been highly influenced by the emergence of conflict in everyday space(s). The treatment of 'otherness'<sup>19</sup> and 'thinking otherwise'<sup>20</sup> had already been introduced in philosophical discourse since the 1970s, but recent debates on 'agonistics'<sup>21</sup> and civility and violence have extended this discussion,<sup>22</sup> based on the incorporation of violence and/or conflict into models of societal development and social exchange.<sup>23</sup> As an example of the incorporation of these philosophical insights into architectural practice, Socratis Stratis and Emre Akbil present 'Hands-on Famagusta', which offers an agonistic model of peace building processes as an alternative to the 'techno-managerial' process that emphasises economic activities. The role creative conflict can play in a regeneration process is exemplified by the authors with three 'commoning practices': namely counter-mapping, which should change one's perspective on the conflict; the creation of thresholds, enabling creative conflict to emerge; and the introduction of urban controversies, thus setting the basic rules for the unfolding of creative conflict. Such practices should lead to the emergence of new institutions and procedures regarding the establishing of peace. This proposed approach is presented as the only true means with which to overcome differences and trauma in a process aimed at peace and reconciliation.

Within this philosophical domain, Sarah Rivière brings forward the notion of 'stasis' and discloses an understanding of the term based on the complicated

meanings it had in ancient Greek philosophy. Contemporary thinkers (Chantal Mouffe and Giorgio Agamben for example) similarly have taken up this understanding of 'stasis' as being the inherent and necessary presence of conflict in society and daily life, as a productive element that increases awareness and nuance, and as a phase that offers both clarification and orientation. Rivière's argument focuses particular attention on five ways of describing stasis, namely, first, as an inherent part of society whose constituent elements are related by kinship, in other words friendly enemies that share a common space. Secondly, stasis can be understood as a charging of energies ready to be released, a distinct moment of pre-kinesis that is necessary for the forces to become fully available. Then, thirdly, as a state of permanent and peaceful equilibrium within a living system, which can actually never be achieved, but rather constitutes the transition to the next phase that is dependent on it. Fourthly, the process and period of adjustment of the living body when confronted with changes as a body that is in stasis is charged as it is readjusting and accumulating energies toward a next phase, a necessary stage therefore, in the process of life. And, lastly, when stasis in society occurs, it becomes imperative that everyone gets engaged and participates in the forming and transformation of society, a process which, as a result, constitutes the very guarantee that war would not break out during the period of stasis. Rivière conclusively claims that to understand public space as a form of stasis means the active participation of the citizen in a kindred yet frictuous moment of development toward growth. This implies restraint and a measured responsive act of force, allowing a society to settle differences, without going to the extent of excluding otherness in its debates as well its (public) spaces.

Additionally, Ayesha Sarfraz and Arsalan Rafique read contemporary Pakistani cities as sites where

conflict has been absorbed in the city, its streets and public spaces. They argue that violence has been accepted in these conditions and has started to play a constructive role in the unfolding of everyday life. Sketching out the history of the country as well as the overall developments of Pakistani cities, the authors claim that diversity and heterogeneity had initially been replaced by segregation and homogeneity as a result of the English colonial practice of rule and divide within former India, which ultimately led, in 1947, to 'the partition'. The ethnic migrations and displacements that were a direct result of this partition resulted in a unprecedented (at least in the Asian context) homogenisation of the population, as minorities either decided to leave, were expelled or were extremely marginalised due to government policies and military-based decisions regarding safety, security, control and surveillance. Nowadays, urban areas in which minorities live have shown a tendency to withdraw into self-regulation and self-securitisation, bordering on concretely distancing themselves from overall state control. The role architecture plays in these contexts is complex. Through their symbolic meanings, buildings are perceived as emblems for the nation state, or at least representative of the period in which certain rulers ruled the nation. The violent attack on these architectural targets not only results in a homogenised cityscape, but also increases the presence of security aspects within the architecture, in the attempt to prevent similar acts of violence on the architecture. The relationships between city and violence are both complicated and multiple, but new forms of resilience are created through artistic interventions centring around or even involving migrants, minorities and other displaced persons. These initiatives and interventions constitute an alternative to the design of urban spaces through security measures only as they open up the possibility that violence is countered through engaged participatory acts in the public realm.

### **The architecture of conflict**

To conclude the series of articles and case studies presented in this issue, we considered it important to speculate on the results of incorporating the act of conflict and the aspects of violence into architectural reflection and practice. To this end, Sam Grabowska presents the restless architectures of the US/Mexico borderlands as indicators of the very foundational characteristics of architecture itself. Emerging out of the constraints imposed by US border patrols as well as Mexican human and drug trafficking, the temporary ephemeral pieces of architecture constructed by border-crossers constitute the principles of shelter, firmness and purposefulness considered to be the very origins of architecture as a distinct cultural practice. Grabowska discusses this 'architecture of anxiety' of border-crossings through three modalities that characterise it, namely sleeplessness, insecure identity and fear of death; and substantiates this characterisation with examples from field research done in the Sonoran desert of Arizona. The first modality, sleeplessness, shows how tactics of sleep become part of the architecture, as a full body protector that extends towards a span based on bodily sizes and possible escape routes. Sleepless border-crosser architecture is paradoxical as it provides shelter but at the same time raises awareness of the immediate surroundings, remarkably merging the timelessness of sleep with the timelessness of constant alert. The second modality, insecure identity, links the difficulties of identity in borderlands with architectural structures that express the same insecurity towards identity. Ultimately constructed as temporary, the architectural structures of the no-mans land of the border have to remain without identity and thus without representation. The third modality, fear of death, attributes to borderland architecture the ultimate element of the uncanny to its spaces, namely the constant presence of death as inherent to the architecture. The characteristics of this architecture

of anxiety are thus ephemerality, invisibility, impatience, cloaked-ness, readiness to be erased, anonymity and lack of any specific identity. It is architecture that tries to not be: neither 'architecture' nor 'there'. The architecture of border-crossings is non-permanent, it either disappears because of vulnerability and lack of maintenance or because of deliberate destruction in order not to leave traces; it needs to be able to adapt to the circumstances, be flexible for both a great variety of climatological circumstances, manoeuvrability as well as survival. Ultimately however, Grabowska's central thesis is not about the making explicit of these 'anxious' characteristics of architecture. Rather, she ideologically posits that any form of anxiety, which is inherent in any border, will be the very origin of the border's demise and undoing.

Finally, in their case study, Moniek Driesse and Isaac Landeros offer a comparative analysis of Rotterdam and Mexico City, which they use to substantiate their understanding of urban spaces of conflict as Neplantha, meaning 'a state of in-betweenness'. This idea of conflict is situated in the confrontation between the built structures of the city and the appropriation of these by the inhabitants of the city using them. This matter will always be resolved, meaning the urban environment becomes the extension of human activity, but only in so far as to the moment a new conflict arises and the whole process of transformation starts anew. The authors argue for a designerly understanding of this process, in which the space that is practiced is anticipated in the projected depiction of the city.

### **Afterword: solidarity?**

While writing this introduction, our news feed captured streamed video of the atrocities of war in the Syrian city of Aleppo, sent by its citizens. During and after the heavy bombardments of the city, citizens hid in its remains. Their footage was

dominated by ruins, parts of buildings, burnt furniture, perforated walls, and mutilated roads covered by a thick layer of dust and gravel. One video streamed a couple of months ago, at the time of a heat wave. During a short ceasefire, an improvised news camera captured five kids happily splashing in a pond. The pond suddenly appeared in the middle of the neighbourhood, just after it was bombarded from the air. The blast hit an underground water pipe that turned the ground around it into a semi-deep puddle, a pool. This uncanny scene of joy was followed this week by a very different type of eyewitness report. Just before the fall of Aleppo, the besieged area consisted of only two square kilometres of the city. This remaining enclave lacked any route of escape, trapping the rebels and the remaining civilians in desperate circumstances. The dramatic tragedy forced civilians to make a 'final' decision. Some chose suicide, others crouched in bombed-out hallways amid the rubble of their former city and turned to the tiny devices in their hands to share with the world their horror, fear, anguish and rage.<sup>24</sup> Watching a city collapse through a sequence of improvised video streams, must have inflicted immense anxiety, fear and despair on both ends of the line. As we watched the last moments of Aleppo's violent obliteration, three other terror attacks took place simultaneously in a Berlin Christmas market, an Ankara art gallery and a Zurich mosque.

So it seems only reasonable to conclude that, yes, conflict is everywhere. Hopefully, in this issue of *Footprint* we have been able to sketch out that the wars of yesterday are nothing like the wars of today nor that their spatial implications are anything but comparable. By now, the city and all its 'contents' – its inhabitants, buildings, architecture, and culture – are simultaneously militarised and under attack. As we are finalising this issue, a new world order has come into being in front of our very eyes. Confronting this state of violence, we cannot but

end with a fervent plea for solidarity and hope. In *Multitude*, Hardt and Negri borrowed the tale of the *Golem* from the Kabbalah to remind us that under the outburst of destruction, there is the promise and wonder of creation, and under the din of our global battlefield, there is not only a lesson about the monstrosity of war, but also about our possible redemption through solidarity,<sup>25</sup> or even love.<sup>26</sup>

### Notes

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## Biographies

Marc Schoonderbeek is an architect, assistant professor at TUDelft and program director of the *Border Conditions & Territories* group. He completed his dissertation 'Place-Time Discontinuities; Mapping in Architectural Discourse' in 2015. Marc has practiced architecture in the Netherlands, Germany and Israel and co-founded in 1998 *12PM-Architecture*, an office for 'Architecture and Urbanism, Design and Research' in Amsterdam. In 2004, he co-founded *66EAST Centre for Urban Culture*, also in Amsterdam. He is currently editor of *Footprint* and *Modi Operandi*, and has (co)-edited 'Houses in Transformation: Interventions in European Gentrification' (2008); 'Border Conditions' (2010) and 'X Agendas for Architecture' (2015).

Malkit Shoshan is the founder of the architectural think-tank *FAST*, the *Foundation for Achieving Seamless Territory*. She is the author of the award-winning book *Atlas of the Conflict, Israel-Palestine* (010, 2011) and co-editor of *Village* (Daminai, 2014). With her projects, she explores the relations between architecture, planning and human rights. In 2016, she was the curator of the Dutch entry to the Venice Architecture Biennale, titled *BLUE: Architecture of UN Peacekeeping Missions*. She is a lecturer at Harvard GSD. Her work was published in newspapers such as New York Times, NRC, Haaretz and exhibited in venues such as the Venice Architecture Biennale (2002, 2008, 2016), Lisbon Triennial (2013), NAI (2007) and The New Institute (2014).

