CULTURAL TECHNOLOGIES OF SURVIVAL
A visual essay by Yana Milev

EMERGENCY DESIGN
Semiotic meaning within the Micro-Politics of Survival and Resistance
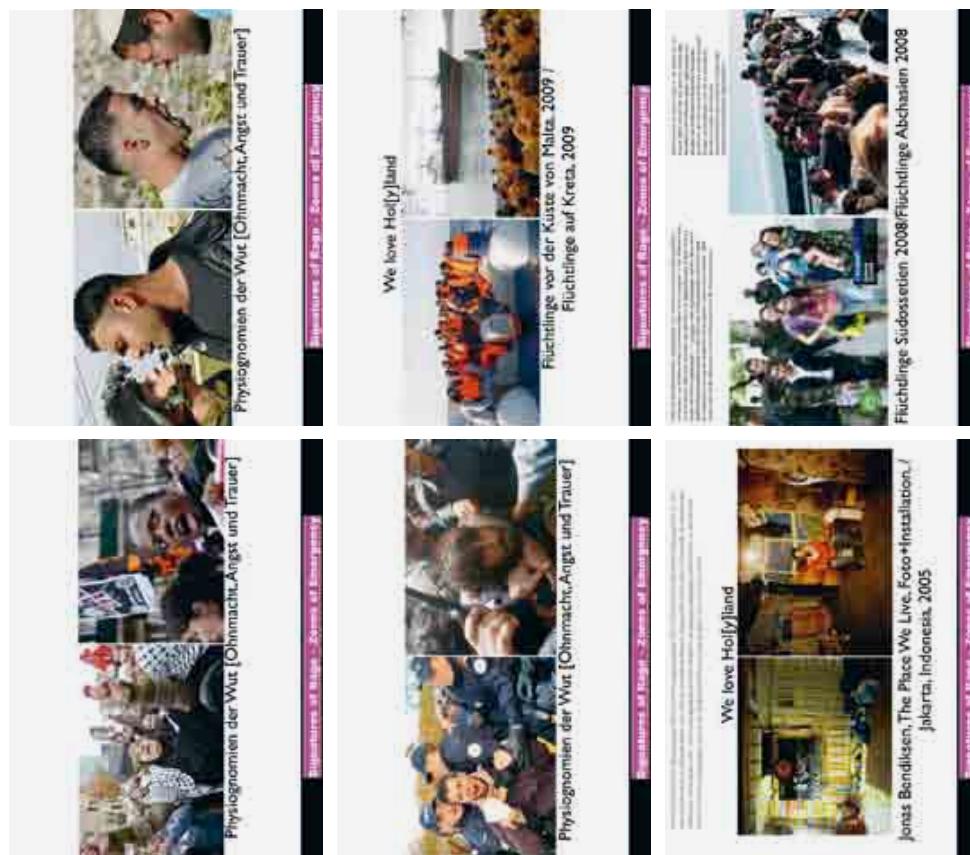Yana Milev

The concept of emergency design draws together various design, media, and sociocultural phenomena first observed in association with marginalized living spaces; as such, it has become a matter of growing public debate. In 2006 I launched the research project *Emergency Design – Design Strategies in Zones of Anomie*. This soon developed into a long-term research platform focusing on four distinct areas: states of emergency, catastrophes, concepts of emergency, and designs for survival. The roots of this Emergency Studies Project[1] go back to the end of the cold war and the beginnings of political postmodernism, a time when many of the issues now confronting us began to crystallize: new types of (asymmetrical) war, economic crises, natural catastrophes in the wake of global climate change, new orders of precariousness – nomadism, human superfluity, poverty – and new strategies in the media and protest movements. Behind these phenomena lay further developments: the war on terror, data control, collapsing financial markets, the spread of corporocratic business, the extension of new economic zones in the form of war zones, etc. What this amounted to in terms of public awareness and discourse was a new type of urban catastrophe. The present essay aims to provide a concrete survey of emergency design, defining and discussing new semiotic spaces of urban survival and resistance.

Civil law: emergency as a state of exception
The dictionary definition of "emergency" – a neologism derived from the Latin *emergere* (to arise or bring to light) – is "a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action."[2] Applied to civil society, the political concept of a state of emergency is modern, arising only after the end of World War II; it denotes not the situation itself but the revocation of the laws hitherto governing a society and their replacement with special "emergency" legislation to counter the situation. The authority to declare a state of emergency in situations of war, civil catastrophe, or the like, and to impose such jurisdiction is based on the concept of national sovereignty; it implies the right to suspend the constitution and effectively create what Giorgio Agamben has called "zones of anomie," states of exception that in Carl Schmitt's terminology are "beyond the line." For Schmitt the sudden and immediate incursion of such a state implies a sovereign arbitrariness in the determination and application of *ultima ratio*–a concept which in constitutional law is used of the declaration of war (*ius ad bellum*) or the legalizing of an existing conflict with all the means required to pursue it, even beyond the purview of international law. Against the background of the type of postmodern war that has emerged since the 1990s, the concept of *ultima ratio* has been extended to cover an increasingly wide range of catastrophes, crises, risks, and preventive actions, as well as the civil, political, economic, and media contexts, whether factual or fictional, in which these impact society; images of an enemy or adversary are a case in point.

The extension of the juridical state of emergency from the field of constitutional to that of civil law amounts to a redefinition of its claim, rooted in the psychopolitical paradigm of shock or trauma in its modern form, including terror, domestic or foreign breakdown, and deterrence. As such it has becomes a basic pattern of reaction applied to precarious or marginalized spaces and their communication in the media. No person or platform can be a priori excluded from its scope, which embraces both victim and aggressor.

Emergencies are on the one hand wars and catastrophes consumed in real time on our television screens: the suicide bombings, plane crashes, explosions, executions, accidents, and climatic devastation that – above all since the end of the cold war – primarily constitute news. At a more individual and local level, the concept of emergency extends to job loss, social impoverishment, wavering prospects, biologically

gated areas

São Paulo, Brasília / Paris Banlieu, Europe

Signatures of Rage - Zones of Emergency

Palästina 2009 / Istanbul 2009

Signatures of Rage - Zones of Emergency

wildes Flüchtlingslager in Calais, 2009

Signatures of Rage - Zones of Emergency

gated areas

Schengenraum / Europaweiter Aktionstag 2005

Signatures of Rage - Zones of Emergency

Calais 2009 / Athen 2009

Signatures of Rage - Zones of Emergency

Jordanien 2009 / Athen 2009

Signatures of Rage - Zones of Emergency

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diminishing employability, and the marginalizing of whole classes of the population along with their living spaces. On top of this, the permanent oscillation of the parameters of social inclusion, the fine line between this time's victims and this time's narrowly escaped, frustrates the very concept of a stable norm.

The concept of emergency thus applies to insecurity of whatever kind — from natural catastrophe to war, from national debt through democratic intervention to social decline — that plunges the (subjective) space inhabited by a person, network, or corporate entity into a state of exception, with fundamental impact on such institutions and values of daily life as justice, crime, and the market.

Sociology: emergency as a new type of urban catastrophe

Emergencies, therefore, embrace what Lars Clausen has called "crass social change" and "abhorrent social processes,"[3] indeed the whole gamut of natural, social, and political disasters caused by deportation, migration, homelessness, famine, drought, shortage of water, or lack of other essential resources that in our post-9/11 world we bundle under the heading of cultural catastrophe. In this respect the concept of emergency has taken on new post-political and post-institutional meaning complementing its implications for civil law.

In his recent book Planet of Slums,[4] Mike Davis gives this new type of urban catastrophe a local habitation and a name, translating the critical discourse of such opponents of globalization as Noam Chomsky, Naomi Klein, Elmar Altvater, and Saskia Sassen to the concrete level of urban anomie represented in the struggle for survival, the slums, and the homelessness of modern megacity peripheries.

The research and publication project Emergency Empire/Emergency Design examines these contexts of civil catastrophe from a sociological point of view.

Media theory: emergency as discourse of anomie

The vocabulary of emergency, survival, states of exception, and anomie has penetrated the discourse not only of political science and sociology but also of cultural and media studies and their philosophy. Against a background of neoliberal markets, global business, and the violation of human and constitutional rights, these concepts serve as signposts in the new discourse of eternal warfare that characterizes an advanced postwar era of society.

The boardrooms of international corporations (or what John Perkins calls "corporatocracies"[5]) delineate and stigmatize public space, designing gated zones that are simultaneously zones of anomie whose "spacing"[6] is effected in terms of the biopolitical exclusiveness and exclusion communicated by corporate design and corporate identity. These spaces have in the past two decades experienced the transformation or dissolution of the classically differentiated fourfold structure of private and public areas plus suburbia and the peripheral zones of military (and/or militant) operation "beyond the line." Urban space has begun to define itself anew as a museum, an order defined by purchasing power, and hence on a par with private space; but by the same token it is also a marginalized space for those excluded from purchasing power and access, a clandestine realm, home to criminally creative forces that harbor the potential for militant-military operations of terror and counterterror at all points of the public-private spectrum. In the discourse of media and design sociology the new structural multiplicity of urban space is rendered visible and experientially accessible.

Physiognomien der Wut [Ohnmacht, Angst und Trauer]

Signatures of Rage – Zones of Emergency

We love Hol[ly]land

Flüchtlinge vor der Küste von Malta, 2009
Flüchtlinge auf Kreta, 2009

Signatures of Rage – Zones of Emergency

Flüchtlinge Südossetien 2008/Flüchtlinge Abchasien 2008

Signatures of Rage – Zones of Emergency

Physiognomien der Wut [Ohnmacht, Angst und Trauer]

Signatures of Rage – Zones of Emergency

Physiognomien der Wut [Ohnmacht, Angst und Trauer]

Signatures of Rage – Zones of Emergency

We love Hol[ly]land

Jonas Bendiksen, The Place We Live. Foto+Installation./
Jakarta, Indonesia, 2005

Signatures of Rage – Zones of Emergency

Who does public space belong to? Space denotes a defined interior, a market created by the twin defining forces of domestic purchasing power and governmental immersion. Public space is a corridor where brands and branding proclaim ownership, and diverse uniforms, from Armani to Zara, with the chipcards concealed within them, evince the right to access and participation. This is the preserve of a new combative phalanx: the inhabitants of the living machine, possessors of the bank accounts that for Peter Sloterdijk:

"provide access to places, persons, goods and data – opportunities derived solely from the fact that the standard form of subjectivity within the grand installation is determined by the availability of purchasing power."[7]

It is at this point that the problem of spatial sovereignty impacts design via the biopolitics of media iconography in the multiple dimensions of living, fashion, physical appearance, and intimacy—an iconography that is at the same time one of separation from the realm of the other, the precarious, superfluous, and dispensable, the migrants and watchers from beyond the fence. The worlds of political and economic, technological and media immersion are designer worlds of social polarization where the exclusiveness of the living machine, the urbs/domus aggregate, ipso facto generates the marginalization of the excluded, the psycho-political emergency of cultural catastrophe and its inherent market, the zones of anomie and media hysteria, the designer paradigms of management and poverty.

What is true of domestic space holds equally for public; house and home have become "an ignorance machine ... an integral instrument of defence, where the basic right of non-respect towards the exterior world [has] found its architectonic pillar."[8] On the one hand, then, stands the apparatus of sovereign exclusiveness, the crystal palaces of the gated community; on the other the habitat of the masses, the vast living machines of slum, ghetto, and suburbia, not to mention the informal settlements of tent city and favela. Across all of it lies the smog of sidelining and burnout, for:

"[t]he case of the 'superfluous' is more than a matter of structural disadvantage in the job market. It is a matter of the nagging, tormenting, self-destructive feeling of not being able to keep up in a world of working to earn and earning for affluence, of being unrepresented in the symbolic system of professional rank and status, in short of being superfluous in a society of superfluity."[9]

Design economy: emergency as transformational topos

Emergency design presents itself as a potential model of spatio-cultural production whose strategic features reflect the management techniques of highly efficient living spaces, bringing them to bear on social habitats conditioned by the state of exception. Discussion focuses on the causal relation between the dynamics of geopolitical buying power on the one hand and those of psychopolitical displacement and marginalization on the other, along with their specific communications, media, design, and marketing strategies. Within this framework, analysis is essentially concerned with differentiating economies of power and profit from those of crisis (a term etymologically and psychologically rooted in a Western mindset, evoking division, discrimination, either/or). As such it generates a field in which notions of war and economics interact and oscillate, a process that has long since overthrown the classical capitalist axioms of nation-state conflict, replacing them with such concepts as "teletopology" and "live-time war" (Virilio), "asymmetrical wars" (Münkler, van Crefeld), and the business and/or media-inspired wars of John Perkins' corporatocracies and

Thomas Meyer's "mediocracies."[10] Based on purchasing power and power-lessness, the conflict of interests is that between "off-space" and "sub-space" forces, involving the psycho-political, sociopolitical and design dimensions of the urban (both public and clandestine), as well as those of free vs. "shadow" trade. It is increasingly a context whose spaces and topographies are determined by the dynamics and interests of design and the media, evident in the contrasting cultures of protest and corporatocracy.

The growing medialization of social and political conflict results in what might be called a geography of crisis – of spatial and topographic fluidity, diasporic confusion and insecurity at the heart of the architecture of safety and seclusion, where vital, flowing design can engage in subversive maneuvers. This is a key to the emergency design project, which sees such critical spatiodynamic relations as a fitting sociological response to the sovereignty of the corporate-media conjunction that is, after all, responsible for emergency and cultural catastrophe in the first place. But it is not just a matter of response, for the creation of the state of emergency, the zones of anomie, is the precondition for the genesis of a new, innovative social space: the "spacings" of design politics and sociology. The state of emergency, and the emergency design that masters it, both gain their impact from their continuity and synchronicity with the principle of crisis that serves them as resource, matrix, and competency.

The principal focus of emergency design lies, therefore, on the investigation of the interface between power, space, and body in the design context. Here, crisis – or what Niklas Luhmann called permanent susceptibility to confusion – becomes the natural default condition of spatial systems. The translation of this principle to the various levels of conflict (religious, economic, distributional, political, or otherwise) pertaining in social space, along with the potential for cultural immunity and resilience it entails, might, it is hoped, facilitate the development of a method beneficial to the space of crisis concerned. In the light of the foregoing analysis the inner logic of emergency design reveals itself, therefore, in the axiom that whatever outwardly transcends or subverts the codex of negotiations and the code of security will create a new inward code of resistance and immunity. New relational space will be generated where new immunities successfully shape and deploy their communications management against outworn systems of security.

Emergency design: new semiotic orders of urban survival

The "superfluous"[11] are a new generation of victims of globalization consisting (among others) of migrant laborers, deportees, political and economic refugees, the poor and the homeless, as well as artists, academics, and freelancers in general. The sociologists Eve Chiapello and Luc Boltanski argue in The New Spirit of Capitolism[12] that precisely these last three groups have not only faced up to and accepted the anomic conditions of the labor market (part-time work, constantly varying profiles and competencies, permanent on-call duty, unpaid work for the CV, project-based temporary positions, etc.) but have created out of them a new type of nomadism: the nomadism of the labor market and the redistribution of capital. These are tribal designs of multiple, rapidly changing surfaces brought into circulation as unadapted capital currency in response to novel situations—which is the very reason they are able to create new cultural capital. This capital, generated out of the precariousness of the situation by the nomadic phalanx, is defined more closely in the first four orders of emergency design.

Joseph Beuys has taught us that "art is capital"[13] when it sets out to resist accommodation in disposable institutions and markets, when the

"other side" determines and expounds the consequences, when by voicing its protest and intransigence it opens up new interstices of political and social communications design. In this context the acceptance of art and design as capital currency by and on the market – and not just the art market – means the acceptance of belligerent social activism.

The problem of belligerence is connected with the juridical and political acceptance of guerilla warfare at the international level, where the crucial issue has always been that of parity in the treatment of guerilla and conventional forces. Belligerence as such – i.e. the recognition of a state of war – is only established in such a context when the political status quo is forced to accept the guerilla movement as a party to negotiations. This (or equivalent recognition by third-party states of international standing) constitutes the foundation for the realization of the group's political aims, as can be seen in the debate about recognition of the PLO. Only after such recognition will guerilla fighters be accorded POW status in the event of capture. Otherwise they count as unlawful or unprivileged combatants and remain outside the remit of international law.

In his 1962 lectures on the *Theory of the Partisan*,[14] the German legal philosopher Carl Schmitt developed these issues on the basis of Spain's guerilla war of 1808–1813. He saw the special status of partisan warfare, its irregularity and immediacy, as related at a theoretical level to the concept of terror both in its modern form and in that of the reign of terror that emerged from the French Revolution.

Jurists have always carefully distinguished between terror, partisan action, and guerilla warfare. However, all three share certain cultural-political traits: autonomy (central motive), resistance (central means), revolution (central aim), and belligerence (central foundation). These features are reflected in the situationist theories of Guy Debord and Derivé (1963), as well as in Michel de Certeau and Pierre Bourdieu's deconstruction of the boundaries between art and action ("art of action" theory), which served as a launching pad for the drive to meld political, legal, media, artistic, theoretical, and sociological strategies into a new political and sociological design imperative. This outed itself at the turn of the millennium as the practice of cultural hacking.[15] A further trend in contemporary discourse, highlighting social action in both theory and design and dismantling the boundaries between art and guerilla activity, leads to a similar activist theory networking activism, art, and the emerging community under the heading of "transnational guerilla."[16] Giorgio Agamben has also written recently on the symbiosis of art and terrorism; indeed his article "Terrorism or Tragicomedy?"[17] can be read as a call for transition to "communications guerilla"[18] action.

In contrast to modern guerilla groups (from the terreur of the French Revolution to the urban activism of the Red Army Faction in 1970s Germany and after), postmodern communications guerilla activity dispenses with the traits of revolution and belligerence in favor of clandestine tribal strategies of cultural transformation. As such it fulfills a central demand of Beuys' extended concept of art as "social sculpture" (soziale Plastik). Today we have added a further dimension of design to this anthropological concept, entailing the fusion of social action in theory, semiotics and media practice into an art form of society in which the dissolution of boundaries between the establishment, politics, art, design, social work, theory, representation, and the market leads to a revaluation and repositioning of nomadism. New forms of cultural capital, new currencies are germinating in the deconstructive grassroots dynamics of migration and diaspora. It is here that the five orders of emergency design have their origin.

1. Survival economies (living space)

The increase in phenomena associated with the first order of emergency design, which we have defined as urban-semiotic designs of survival and living, is directly due to the globalization and urbanization of precariousness, poverty, exclusion, marginalization, and human superfluity that goes hand in hand with the globalization and urbanization of private and profit interests. This fact in turn impacts and multiplies the statistics of global population growth, of the daily load added to the mountain of garbage and toxic waste, to the housing shortfall, to those barred from the satisfaction of basic needs, to cheap products and media trash, to exclusion from a public space whose events are either coded or overpriced, to the dearth of resources, geopolitical migration, urban expansion, the explosion of urban populations, the extension of free markets, etc. The consequences are expressed in the chapter headings of critical discourse, as in Peter Sloterdijk's "global sea of poverty"[19] or Mike Davis's *Planet of Slums*:

According to the conservative calculations of the report [of the UN Habitat organization] a billion people currently live in slums, and more than a billion struggle for survival in irregular employment conditions. The spectrum ranges from street traders through casual laborers, child-carers and prostitutes to people who sell their own organs for transplantation. These are shocking figures, all the more unsettling for the fact that our own children and grandchildren will experience humanity at its quantitative peak. Sometime around 2050 or 2060 the human population of the Earth will reach its maximum, probably at about ten or ten-and-a-half billions. This figure is admittedly well below the apocalyptic prophecies of the past, but no less than 95 percent of this growth will take place in the cities of the South. This means that the entire future growth of the human race will occur in cities, predominantly in poor cities and to a great extent in slums.[20]

The global employment and housing crisis so impressively and consistently presented by Mike Davis represents, as it were, an emergency that in a sociological perspective can be seen as the result of neoliberal industrialization. Further contemporary emergencies are climatic change, with its increasingly catastrophic scenarios, new asymmetrical wars and hyperindustrial proxy wars, as well as service sector wars under the cover of UN aid organizations and UN emergency forces.

The phenomena of emergency design in this first sphere consistently reveal techniques of survival management in conditions of direct impact through the emergencies of "crass social change" and "abhorrent social process" such as garbage housing or squatting. The new cultural capital, the currency of this situation is first and foremost the immunity that grants resilience. Medical sociology sees resilience as the ability to react flexibly to changing contexts, and to cope with stressful, frustrating, traumatic, difficult, and otherwise charged situations without major psychological damage. From a perspective of affluence, the strategies developed by social systems whose members consistently suffer from acute deprivation with respect to housing, hygiene, nutrition, privacy, etc. remain a matter of astonishment. The survival economies of this first order are slum economies inhabiting and transforming the exclusive trash of the cities to engender the anthropological humus of planet Earth.

2. Political activism (rights and resource space)

The (human) rights space, suffering collateral damage, is not just a focus for economists and political scientists, but also for political activists on a worldwide scale. Organized in blogs, projects, and platforms, the most well known from this group are Human Rights Watch,

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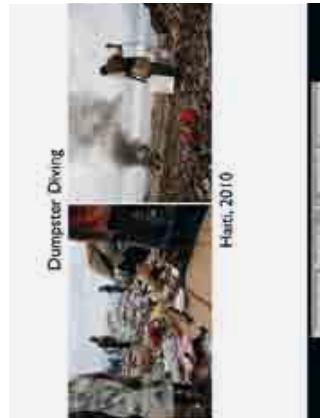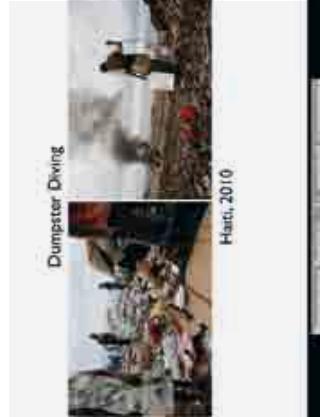
Greenpeace, attac, AVAAZ, and Amnesty International. Social exclusion, poverty, and human rights abuses such as illegal arrests, surveillance and torture, deportation and migration dramas, environmental catastrophes, world-wide water disasters as well as the discrimination of women, female circumcision, forced prostitution, etc.—these are all the object and the reason for Emergency Design's second order of political activism.

As a direct reaction to random abuse of rights and resources, caused above all by states, governmental agencies, and business corporations, activists react worldwide with a differentiated network of instruments such as boycotts, strikes, and media work. Flashmob events, for example the most recent one by AVAAZ, the "Climate Wake Up Call" on September 21, 2009, but also film productions, for example the sensational production Waiting for the Guards by Marc Hawker and Ishbel Whitaker, commissioned by Amnesty International, are part of this phenomenon.

The borders between politics, theory, street art, protest, and strikes such as the squatting event by the Enfants du Don Quichotte in Paris 2006/2007,[21] between political campaigns, Net activism and the media and narrative interventionism of culture hackers are often unclear. The lively connection between political sociology and political practice in the social space as well as within the postwar institutions gains an impressive protagonist in the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. His solidarity with railway workers on strike – voiced at a meeting in December 1995 – is well known. In 1998 he supported the movement for the unemployed in France, was cofounder of the critics of globalization attac, and in May 2000 he was engaged in forming a network for social movements against neoliberalism. "Sociology is a martial art," was the polysemic slogan for a Bordieu position that shifted between research, solidarity, and mediation.

3. Grid hacking, culture hacking, culture jamming, communications guerrilla (data space)

The third sphere of emergency design is summed up in Roland Barthes' question: "Isn't the best form of subversion the distortion of codes rather than their destruction?" Like Martin Kippenberger's slogan "The aim of design is to define space" and Henk Oosterling's "Design is Dosein [being/presence]," Barthes' aphorism highlights the transformational quality of socially immanent design.

In contrast to the political and economic trend of recent decades, which has been to seek a secure foothold in the inner world of capital, in the living machines of comfort and consumption, crisis capital is the new currency that opens the door to the systems and cultures of crisis—a thesis and a perspective that turns the discourse of access and opportunity, hitherto monopolized by purchasing power, on its head.

Emergency design is the transformation of capital on the basis of crisis economies, concretely effected in the performative link between the currencies of established capital and crisis capital. Here new spacings (or spatial productions) arise that unequivocally incorporate a transformation of the established currencies of rank, money, image, purchasing power, consumption, access to opportunity, prestige, beauty, knowledge, security, etc., as well as a shift in the scale of power and systematic dominance that results from that upheaval.
Emergency designs are to be found to a significant degree in emerging systems, networks, platforms, and domains. New topologies of art are new topologies of cultural production, and at the same time new spaces for the redistribution of cultural capital. They function queerly, as critical microtopes of the in-between queering and querying media, disciplines, politics, economics, and semiotics.

Squatting
= illegales Besetzen von urbanen Zonen, Gebieten, Objekten, oder Land
Refugee-Camp, Kongo 2009 / Slum, Dharavi, India, 2005

Trekking
Pakistan 2009 / Sudan 2009

Bag Picking
Kongo, 2008 / Dakar, 2009

Dumpster Diving
Haiti, 2010

Shuttling (Arbeitsmigranten)
Zug-Shuttle, Indien / Walk-Shuttle, China, 2008

Mobile Housing (SDF) / Camping
Portland, the „Little San Francisco" for the Homeless, 2008
Obdachloser Flüchtling, Abchasien, 2008

Billions are spent every year, specifically in the European countries of the Schengen Agreement, on interior design and related events, trade fairs, publicity and PR productions, media and advertising in general – all of it devoted solely to the marketing of exclusiveness in terms of advanced and innovative work-worlds and surfaces. Nor is it innovation and creativity that are being marketed here, but power and dominance. Here parasitic strategies are employed by what is termed a "poor" clientele – on the analogy of flashmob and smart mob concepts – to interrupt and subvert the goals and methods of prosperous competing market currents.

Parasitic strategies are unannounced and unprepared participations in expensively produced events and interiors and the appropriation of these for a divergent countermessage. They differ from recycling strategies in not defining the specific tracks of market circulation they break open for business; and their proximity to clandestine techniques gives them a guerilla quality. As such, they encompass strategies of civil disobedience.

Civil disobedience is a weapon. Whilst the state does all it can to nip protest in the bud, the disobedient are a constant irritant outside the framework of the law. Whether blockading streets at the G8 summit or genetically manipulated maize fields at harvest time, civil disobedience can be relied upon to generate spectacular pictures and any amount of polemics.[22]

Parasitic strategies are first and foremost designs of resistance in public space; they act out of an impulse of protest and seek to undermine established power strategies by molding art and politics.[23] Tracking the conceptual ideas of cultural hacking back to well-known ancestors, Franz Liebl and Thomas Düllo write in their editorial:

"Cultural hacking, the art of strategic action, illustrates the opportunities for cultural innovation available today. From Dada through situationism to punk a direct line of development leads to current forms of subversive strategy. These follow the hacker logic of penetrating alien systems, grasping their frames of reference and supplanting these with new and surprising orientations of their own. Thus cultural hacking is the contemporary realization of the art of action as advocated by Michel de Certeau."[24]

Cultural hacking is practiced in many different areas and contexts and incorporates a network of designers, artists, managers, activists, and academics. Liebl and Düllo plot the movement's strategic arsenal with new concepts such as "placebo products," "uniformed brand communication," "terrorist appropriation," "coolness competency," "deconceptual coding," "hysteria-based market segmentation," and "brand hacking."

"Communications guerilla," a concept introduced by Gerald Raunig at the end of the 1990s in the Transversal Program of the European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (eipcp),[25] stands for a cultural technique sharply distinct from the political actionism of the 1970s and 1980s. Here art and politics merge in an action system of protest culture that aims to combine political action with performative, semiotic, narrative, and media interventions. The interplay of representations, identities, and power strategies gives rise to absurd, paradoxical, and hybrid constructs that explicitly reject the epithet "art-in-action," though their public performance often involves artists. Yet this is scarcely possible within the business of the art world:
The very concept of art functions as a lubricant enabling the audience to ingest the most blatant provocation without choking. Radical obloquy directed at the established art scene, for example, has long

Solidarökonomien
= Teilen und Tauschen von Grundnahrungsmitteln
Flüchtlingslager Irak / Kosovo

Homeless
Augustin Legrand & SDF [Sans Domicile Fixe],
Les Enfants de Don Quichotte
Paris, 2006/2007

Climate
Shame
Greenpeace, Gorner Gletscher, CH / Political Intervention,
Klimakonferenz Kopenhagen 2009

Netzzensur
CCC / Internet-Mem Zensursula

BUY NOTHING DAY
What makes a good society:
We Are All American
Buy Nothing Day, Adbusters /
ask yourselfe, Dropping Knowledge, Berlin

DUMPSTER DIVING TEAM
Dumpster Diving Team /
Go Dumpster Diving!
Against Eco-Pollution

been canonized and neutralized by the artistic avant-garde. The storm of signs and images launched by the mere employment of artistic techniques creates tension only when it has left the integrative framework of the art world behind.[26]

In this sense, communications guerilla can rank as a new hybrid form of protest culture because and inasmuch as its guerilleros inhabit ordinary work worlds and institutions, from which they do not seek to distance themselves militantly:

"For communications guerillas it is not enough to know their enemy: they must themselves master the forms and signs that constitute, so to speak, the language of power. Communications gueriller@s are neither spies nor undercover agents in the worlds of work and bourgeois consent. At an everyday level they are often part of both worlds: they accept roles as teachers, colleagues, co-legitimates, and assume functions within the capitalist system. It is this that makes the oscillation between radical critique and camouflage possible."[27]

Emergency designs of this sort are mostly produced in communicative microtopes of de-limitation, expropriation, and over-identification.

4. Radical advertising, fashion, shelter architecture, art and media as protest (media space)

Emergency designs of the media space are forms of cultural production which, like those of the communications guerilla, also create new interventionist microtopes in social space, the difference being that they represent art forms as forms of society. Admittedly the distinction between art and the activities of a communications guerilla is a fine one, not least because artists, too, belong to the ranks of the precarious and of protest—in their case directed against the art market and industry. Many artists have liberated themselves from the classical concept of art, the art market, and the dictation of artistic reputation by international capital; for, like other highly qualified and flexible (unemployed) freelancers, they often live in conditions of minimum security, where they nevertheless (or for that very reason) generate highly creative micropolitical systems of survival.

No wonder artists of this kind prefer to call themselves activists: as such they are represented in various roles on many platforms; and it is in such contexts – in the forms and dynamics of alternative and anti-art – that one should look for fourth order emergency design. Banksy, for instance, exemplifies the techniques of culture hacking and culture jamming – and also their sanctioning by the art market. His high profile actions have brought him public notice; others are first noticed by fellow artists of the establishment – either out of genuine sympathy or out of coquetry with the more powerfully driven scenes of protest, street art, and hacking. Emergency design as an art form can be understood in these cases as an answer to emergency design as the space of survival.

New issues in art, architecture, and advertising are frequently based on research into social and political dynamics in the critical media. Thus a recent topic to sweep the art scene was security – evidenced in the Berlin exhibition on "Embedded Art" – whereas habitat, survival, and war are relatively stable and recurrent aspects of that scene.

But since the market is also interested in the grassroots scene, the fourth space of emergency design presupposes a certain mimicry of the existentialist first three spheres with regard to asserting its own novelty on the market. Yet the space for movement between new directions, interventions, adaptations, annexations, or indeed colonializations,

Adbusting

…against the femal body as sexist brand target…

Oliviero Toscani, No-Anorexa_Nolita, Rom 2007 / Daniele Buetti, YSL 2003

(Ped/iRaq,10.000 volts in your pocket, guilty or innocent, 2008

Lösung für das Pollusion-Problem mit PET-Flaschen

Rocini-Rocini, 2009 / Urban Nomads, Wohnsysteme für Obdachlose und andere Nomaden

United Bottle, 2009, Instant Architects Zürich/Berlin /

We love Holly/land

Michael Blum, Exodus, Installtion 2008

Adrian Paci United Colors of Migration 2008 / Lucy&George Orta Antarctic Village -No Borders 2007

is often limited. Nor should one forget that the Marco Polo syndrome thematized by Catherine David remains critical in the arts–including architecture, advertising, and film. In a region of such rapidly flowing borders the questions "When is art critical?" "When is it synchronous with communications guerilla action?" "When does it subject deprivation and need to its own craze for innovation?" are hard to answer. After all, the problematic aspect of such transformational activity reaches across the borders of aesthetic, sociological, or ecological catego- ries, inasmuch as its key concepts – precariousness, capital currency, redistribution of cultural capital, etc. – are on the one hand socio- logical topoi. On the other hand, they have a strong impact as cultur- al strategy , mainly and predominantly as techniques and forms of sur- vival within the labor market.

5. Critical platforms, programs, and campaigns (knowledge space)

The fifth sphere of emergency design consists of the culture and design economies that generate and manage critical microtopes of the post-in- stitutional, post-political and post-economic world. Significant char- acteristics of such microtopes are in the first place the active dis- ruption of established political and economic urban mainstreams, and their diversion and utilization for the social, intellectual, media, and energy interests of the microtope. A further characteristic is the existence in such microtopes of aggregates of resistance and refusal in terms of culture and design research. Concretely this means that the production segments of the new critical microtopes operate not only with many design strategies from emergency orders 1–3, but also lead to new types of fusion, and to new platforms, programs, and institutes of culture and design research, as well as culture and media activism. Critical microtopes of this type incorporate, for example, design strat- egies for the redistribution of cultural capital, for culture hacking and culture jamming, indeed for design and media anarchy in the wid- est sense – including squatting, blackspot philosophy, culture and me- dia theory, and brand management in free-label stores – as well as for publications, platforms (blogs), festivals, and conferences.

In the urban space of global metropolis and megapolis a new flexible mi- gratory and nomadic market system has emerged. Divorced from the mod- ern institutions of the academy, art market, and free market in gener- al, it is a grassroots movement whose dynamics generate the blackspot zones I have called microtopes – a name that reflects their complex or- ganic structure. Here stores and showrooms disseminate, together with their labels and products, the post-political theories and blackspot philosophies of culture hacking, grid hacking, and their derivatives; and behind them are whole scenes that not only conspicuously wear an- tifashion but also organize conferences, produce sounds, and exhibit art, quite apart from gratifying their members' appetites for dump- sterware. Behind the visible showrooms and label stores in the cities, their action spaces – whose logos often represent only a www domain – are responsible for network platforms, blogs, and physical squats, raves and noise parties, but also for living, office, and studio space, as well as independent institute platforms. In this environment ur- ban mass aggregates are hacked across the board: from the pay-check stream of consumers and brand-shoppers, through the information flood of pop and trash consumers, to the asphalt river of employees, nine-to- five office workers gracing the streets in company cars and city suits ... The following platforms, programs, festivals, and institutes represent the sort of critical microtope I mean.

Conclusion

Emergency design as research approach and critical practice in post- political and post-institutional but enraged times highlights the pos- sibilities of precarious, nomadic adaptation to living space in several

elpcp in Zürich 2009 /
RG @ Bureau for Open Culture, Ohio, 2009

I. ED Symposium, ZHdK Zürich 2006 /
I. Panel Talk in-between emergencies, ZKM, 2009

Eco-Design: Solutions for wasted urban Areas

Buckminster Fuller/Vertical Farm Design

Design for the other 90% / Design Revolution

Curatorial Platforms /Collaborative Acting

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Comité van Roosendaal,Amsterdam,Symposium 2010 /
Emergency Biennale

Urban Typhoon Workshops in Koliwada,Mumbai

orders and/or spheres of critical subversion. They have been introduced in this essay. As such emergency design represents and understands itself as a form of the Beuysian approach of society-as-art. While collaborating, triggering, detaching and invading, resisting aesthetization – it takes serious emerging non-exploitable micotropes, immense spaces of exception amidst induced states of exception. It could pay off to regard those as laboratories where a different cultural capital and transformational strategies of survival are generated as transversal currency of crisis capital.

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5 John Perkins, Confessions of an Economic Hit Man, New York: Plume, 2005.
6 The concept is taken from Martina Löw, Raumsoziologie, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2005.
7 Peter Sloterdijk, Im Weltinnenraum des Kapitals, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2005, p. 309.
8 Peter Sloterdijk, Sphären III, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2004, p. 540.
9 Berthold Vogel, "Überflüssige in der Überflussgesellschaft? Sechs Anmerkungen zur Empirie sozialer Ausgrenzung," in: Heinz Bude, Andreas Willisch, (eds.), Exklusion. Eine Debatte über die 'Überflüssigen.' Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2008, p. 157.
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17 Giorgio Agamben, "Terrorism or Tragicomedy?" in: Libération, November 19, 2008.
18 autonome a.f.r.i.k.a.-gruppe, Luther Blissett, Sonja Brünzels, Handbuch der Kommunikationsguerilla – wie helfe ich mir selbst, Hamburg and Berlin, 1997.
19 Peter Sloterdijk, Im Weltinnenraum des Kapitals, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2005.
20 Mike Davis, Planet of Slums (Dossier Megastädte), http://www1.bpb.de/themen/SB18M2,0,0,Planet_der_Slums.html, p. 2, retrieved January 10, 2011.
21 Les enfants de Don Quichotte (Don Quijote's Children) was the name of the association that grouped over 280 homeless in this unusual demonstration. The idea originated in an art project. In the fall of 2006, the actor Augustin Legrand, constantly accompanied by cameras, spent three months among the SDF (the French term for the homeless: "sans domicile fixe"), Wiener Zeitung, Saturday, March 17, 2007.
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ANGER AND RAGE GROW
The "End of History" was only an Interlude, "The Political" is as Present as Before
Rudolf Maresch

The mood is as grave as it is eerie: Masked youths set fire to cars; enraged farmers block motorways with tractors and cow dung; rioters wearing sunglasses aim cobblestones at policemen and other security forces; red-shirted protestors occupy airports and block parliament; Greek teachers storm the Ministry of Finance; bearded young men attack European commuter trains with rucksack bombs. The list of such outbreaks of uncontrolled rage, hatred and anger, could be extended indefinitely. They can also be traced right across the globe, from Genoa, London, and Wall Street, to Seattle, Heiligendamm, Athens, Teheran, and Bombay.

An analysis of these phenomena would probably yield similar results: Indignation, rage, and anger at exclusion and speculation, poverty and financial capitalism, disregard and pillaging by the modern fiscal state, is growing — both amongst the disadvantaged and members of respected professions. Sometimes directed, at other times diffuse, they raise their opposition to "those up there," or the global economic system, or unjust living conditions, or God and the world. The air is not filled with lead, however it is occasionally explosive. This can be clearly seen in the arms technology build-up by the security forces, by the state's surveillance, by control and security measures instituted for state visits and mass events.

Venus loves us
These concentrated outbreaks of anger, hatred, and rage probably came as something of a surprise to a number of us over the last few years. Above all in Europe, which many observers considered to be the first coalition of post-political states or even a "postmodern paradise." Over the decades, the "thymotic culture" in Old Europe, fed on self-affirmation, pride, and respect, has been reduced to a mere stump. It has been supplanted by brands, names, and goods whose potential is focused and absorbed through media aesthetics. Mass consumption, pop culture, and the feminization of everyday life have ensured that political passions have become tempered and that there have been no collective movements of note. Since then, public expressions of self-affirmation, of indignation and outrage at this and that have been couched in the form of "morality."

There are reasons for this. On the one hand were the two bloody world wars and the mass murder of the Jews, which forced the continent to dampen rising political passions. On the other hand there was history — understood as the bloody conflict of antagonistic forces, values, and ideologies — which appeared to have come to an end in 1989. The revolutionary potential ignited by Christianity, socialism, or fascism had been extinguished. The age of "great narratives" was not just over; we were also convinced that the "political," understood as a collection of passions with intensive associations, no longer had a vital role to play in world events. Capitalism, free trade, and commerce were victorious across the board. And they were accompanied by liberal democracy. From now on, as the recently deceased philosopher Heinz-Dietrich Kittsteiner noted soberly and dryly, "it is only about the best possible capitalism," about celebrating the "Sunday of life," the turn to sport, fun, and play, to philosophy and art, which Alexandre Kojève saw dawning after the end of history.

Mars returns
However, not everyone wanted to join in the songs of jubilation that Francis Fukuyama intoned in The End of History and the Last Man. It was German poets and thinkers, who, in the "rising tragic chorus" (to quote Botho Strauss), already saw the approach of the future "molecular civil war" (Hans Magnus Enzensberger) that awaited us in the underground stations and public squares of the metropolises. And it was Samuel Huntington who, as early as the mid 1990s, banished Fukuyama's watchwords of the end of history and the last man to the realms of fantasy.

Despite the multitude of new democracies that constituted themselves in eastern Europe, he rejected the idea of a global victory of liberal democracy, of freedom, free trade, and human rights. In his opinion, the world had neither fundamentally changed, nor was it possible to escape history itself so easily. Instead, he saw new fault lines and social conflicts appearing on the horizon, precisely there where, above all, different cultures collided, irreconcilably confronting each other.

Now there is no one left who is prepared to seriously defend the post-historical position. Nearly all observers are convinced that "history is back" and that the world will face new ideological conflicts, battles for dignity and values, for social recognition, battles over life and death. Should history have ever really allowed itself this luxury and flirted with its own end, then at the most it was a short "geopolitical breather." We have long since "entered a new age of geopolitics," as Robert Kagan recently stated.

Disagreement remains only as to the character of these future conflicts. Where one sees "ethnonationalism" (to take Jerry Z. Muller's term) as the source of the political conflicts that will hold global politics in suspense, another sees the economic ascendancy of old powers such as Russia and China as constituting a new antagonism on what Robert Kagan calls a "world historical scale." As a consequence, not only will the old rivalry between liberalism and absolutism, between democratic and autocratic powers, find new expression. A "clash of civiliztions" will also develop parallel to this, a conflict waged along religious and ethnic battle lines, between tradition and modernity, and between religious and secular forces.

Venus flirts with Mars

However, what many of his readers had overlooked was that Fukuyama, with his re-reading of Hegel and his interpreter Alexandre Kojève, had already stumbled upon a problem that would not so neatly comply with the picture of *The End of History*. Some people, although there was supposedly no longer a cogent reason for it, still wanted to wage political battles and fight with others for better values and ideas. "Experience teaches us," wrote Fukuyama, "that people who are no longer able to fight for the just cause because this has already been won in a previous generation, fight against the just cause. They fight for fighting's sake."

This reorientation of history towards renewed struggles for prestige, honor, dignity, and pride on the one hand, and fame, power, and social recognition on the other, also forces liberal and post-political systems to conduct a process of self-examination and correction. Is human life "essentially an inescapable struggle," one "between values and ideals," as claimed by Leo Strauss, the ostensible phrasemonger of US neoconservatism? Is this desire for more – this wish to be stronger and ever more powerful – insatiable? Do residues and voids ("energetic surpluses") remain after the sublation and elimination of the "deficiency," as Georges Bataille and Jacques Lacan suggest, thus making man a being that is both "dangerous" and highly "unpredictable"? Consequently, is it just the experience of need, misery, and injustice, of poverty and repression that lead to individual and collective rebellion, or is it also the daily suffering of slights and humiliations, of indignities and insults, that whips the Thymos within us into a frenzy?

Translated from the German by Colin Shepherd.