

## PUBLIC SERVICES

The exhibition *Public Services* brings together projects by artists and architects whose works and research deal with problems involving the service sector in contemporary urban environments. These projects represent a critical consideration of alternative models of public services, which, ideally, are founded on the principles of openness, access, equality, participation, mobility, adaptability, and transformativity. When artists today think about structures and forms in the contemporary city, they think above all about the importance of open communication within urban structures. By occupying the space that lies between the many different users of cities, corporate capital (and its interests), and the urban structure, they draw attention to processes of degradation and appropriation, borders between public and private, the de-industrialization and agrarianization of cities, and so on, while developing new public-service models based on participation, exchange, and solidarity.

*Public Services* presents five different starting points for engagement and five explicitly subjective approaches. These projects and creative works have been conceived as forms of immediate and physical intervention in the structure of the city, as social interaction, as a virtual utopian scheme, etc. In terms of their goals, these works may be either indirect or immediate, action-based or utopian.

Marjetica Potrc is interested in the city as a multilayered spatial and social organism. Her works reflect the fragmentary and contradictory experience of the urban environment. She juxtaposes different locations and cities so as to create comparisons between disparate corners of the globe. In doing so, she attempts to understand how the urban context reacts to its own failings. The project she put together for the 3rd Liverpool Biennial deals with alternative sources of energy and their placement in a degraded environment. A balcony with a wind turbine was installed on the fourteenth floor of the Bispham House tower block. The project helped to improve the living conditions of two families.

Paula Roush works in a variety of media — architecture, sound, video, photography, installation, etc. Her recent project *SOS:OK (Save Our Souls: Zero Killings)*, organized in the London neighborhood of Bermondsey (known as Biscuit Town), brought together local residents and employees of now-closed Peek Freans Biscuit Factory to produce an “emergency biscuit.” As part of a series of events highlighting the area’s history, they produced a new series of nutritional biscuits, packaged as emergency food rations. The first stage of the project was a week of workshops that compiled the reminiscences of those who had worked in the factory. The second part gathered together four hundred volunteers, who then participated in the operation *SOS:OK*, the largest simulation of an emergency food relief program ever to take place in London.

In her projects, Apolonija Šušteršič employs various media (architecture, video, photography, social interaction) in order to actively engage the urban space. She is interested in active intervention, the transformation of spaces, and the resocialization of the urban environment. Her projects respect the site-specific aspects of a given location, very often using them as their starting point. By establishing a public dialogue within the context of various forms of public services — whether a video library or a consultancy for home interior design — she intervenes in day-to-day relations and offers new answers

to the question of the role of art in today's world. Her project *Prototype for a Self-Employed Economic Unit* was developed as a support structure for creating new jobs.

*CODE:RED* is an ongoing collaborative research project that investigates the area of informal parallel economies, especially those practiced by urban minorities, such as sex workers. The conceptual basis for the model *Working Unit Z01* grew out of a collaboration with the architect Anja Planišček, historian Petra Hoblaj, and the International Organisation for Migrations (IOM). This new model of mobile architecture is designed to serve as a basic module that can be adjusted to meet the needs of the independent work of sex workers. Easily assembled, the camper *Working Unite Z01* provides a simple form of transport that can be easily connected to existing energy sources and sanitation systems; alternatively it may be adapted for self-provision system. The *Working Unit Z01* module was inspired by numerous utopian and real urbanistic and architectural models from the late 1960s, for example, Peter Cook's concept of the Plug-In City and the diametric concept of New Babylon, which were conceived as collective social projects and which predominantly operated as a specific projective frame for creating new situations.

Temporary Services is a Chicago-based art collective that has been in operation since 1998. It is made up of Brett Bloom, Marc Fischer, and Salem Collo-Julin. Through numerous public actions, exhibitions, and interventions, the collective problematizes such issues as authorship, public property, alternative distribution, and the like. Along with several other related initiatives, Temporary Services runs an experimental center in Chicago for visual culture, creative urbanism, social gatherings, and so on. Through the center, Temporary Services has helped create an independent network of similar initiatives both in Chicago and beyond. Temporary Services is primarily interested in ephemeral public projects that operate outside conventional or official categories of public expression. With its *Binder Archive* Temporary Services developed a new strategy for bringing large projects to different audiences in an active way. Binders — produced by artists, organizations, archivists, and other groups — are filled with photographs, drawings, documentation, tactile objects, etc., and stored in plastic sleeves. Each binder is a self-contained project or archive of the work of a group or an individual.

Tadej Pogacar