Momentarily

Learning from Mega-Events

Edited by
Bik Van der Pol
Alissa Firth-Eagland
and Urban Subjects

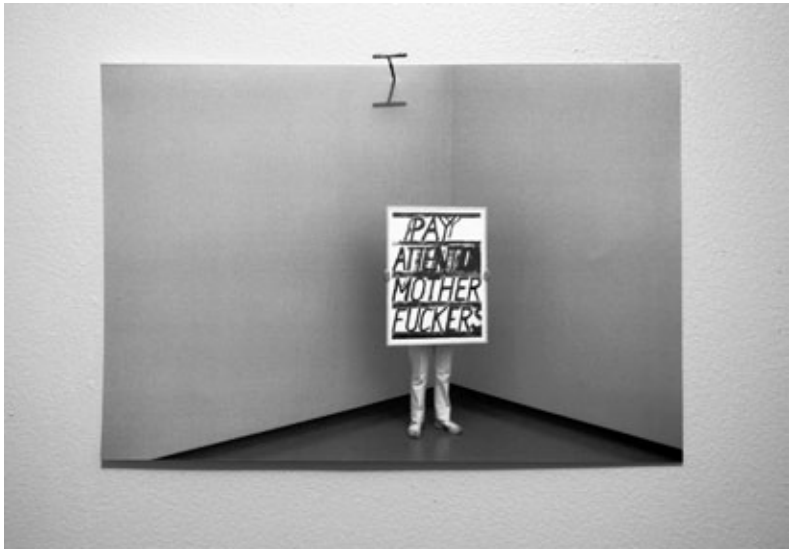


Table of Contents

Foreword Caitlin Jones 3

Invisible Becoming Alissa Firth-Eagland 5

Approaching the Long Moment Jeff Derksen 14

Lefebvre on Moments Stuart Elden 24

In Dialogue Bik Van der Pol and Urban Subjects 32

Good Morning Vancouver! Bik Van der Pol 39

What Kind of Society Do We Want? Jerry Zaslove and Bitter/Weber 48

Spectacle Capitalism: Expo 86, the Olympics, and Public Education Myka Tucker-Abramson 58

Against the State Am Johal 64

Model Cities Lize Mogel 71

Skating Among Palm Trees Rob Hornstra and Arnold van Bruggen 79

Normalization of "Culture" Under Neoliberal Governmentality: Istanbul European Cultural Capital Project Pelin Tan 85

On Potential and the City Candice Hopkins 94

Biographies, Index of Images, Colophon 104

almost irreplaceable because it is particularly well suited for critically analyzing and challenging the claims of the media-driven zeitgeist."[4]

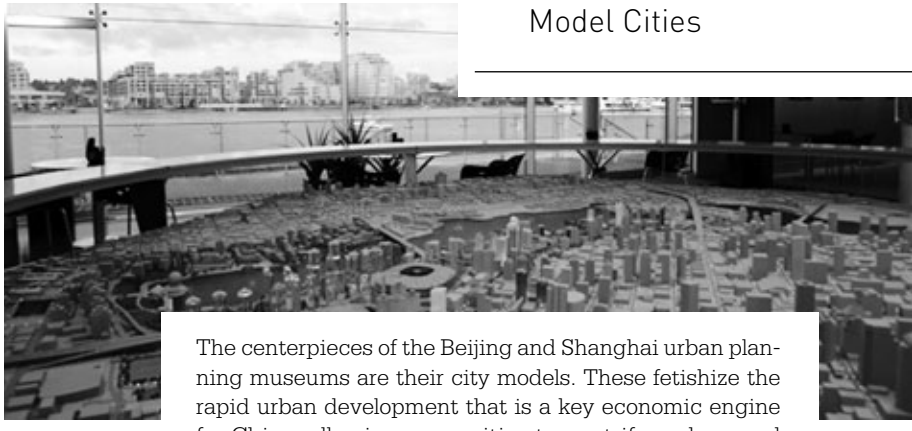
As the relationship between development, the state and culture becomes inextricably linked, in an age of precarious funding for the arts, and in an age of precarious housing, the space for an autonomous institution is difficult to imagine. Perhaps a response that suits this neoliberal relationship of culture to the urban will be in spaces that exist outside the existing systems of art production.

Footnotes

1. David Harvey, *Speech to the World Social Forum* 2010 (http://kasamaproject.org/2010/06/13/david-harvey-is-another-communism-possible/).
2. Slavoj Žižek, *Against Human Rights* (speech, http://www.egs.edu).
3. Giorgio Agamben, *Means without End: Notes on Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2000), 124.
4. Boris Groys, "Art at War," *Art Power* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 129.

Lize Mogel

Model Cities



The centerpieces of the Beijing and Shanghai urban planning museums are their city models. These fetishize the rapid urban development that is a key economic engine for China, allowing some cities to gentrify and expand exponentially. Recent development booms are linked to the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics and the Shanghai World Expo 2010—mega-events with an eye to the world stage.

Both museums are situated near cultural focal points—Shanghai's Urban Planning Exhibition Hall is at one edge of People's Square, Beijing's is just south of Tiananmen Square. The city model is the main attraction, set in the major part of a floor of the building. Balconies on the floor above allow you an aerial view of the model (Shanghai's museum also has a VIP balcony that is somewhat lower so special visitors can get a closer look). Light shows from above and within, LEDs buried in the model, highlight newly built areas of the city and important historic areas. This is urban planning theater at its most sublime.

At this scale, your relationship to space and place changes. You are the planner, the architect and the state—with the

ability to visualize the entire territory at once. This Lilliput is not troubled by social problems or political disputes; buildings are without inhabitants, roads are without traffic, and there is barely a hint of infrastructure like sewage or electricity. It's a city of architecture.

Beijing's city model reproduces the city that is also central to tourist maps. The Forbidden City, the "starchitecture" of the new financial district, and the Olympic area are specially lit. The model is inset into a thick glass floor, tiled with a black-and-white, backlit aerial map of the city—a room-sized Google map. Visitors squat to locate themselves, their history, running fingers over the glass. While they can touch the map, they can only gaze at the model from behind a barrier. Chrome stanchions with red belts enforce the border between the model and the map. The border is between the old and the new; between skyscrapers and hutongs; dense central city and land for agriculture or industry. The model is the glittering representation of progress, of construction, development and growth, of Technicolor reality. The photomap, with its quaint greenish tint, depicts the out-of-date, the less important. This dichotomy portends the future, as eventually more tiles of the map will be removed and replaced with model as development spreads in the actual city (perhaps with similar speed and finality).

China's top-down development policies and relocation tactics result in displacement of disempowered residents, who are often moved to the city's periphery, their community ties broken and access to transportation and work made difficult, if not impossible. However, unusual care was taken with the former residents of the Shanghai Expo 2010 site on opposing banks of the Huangpu River. The original master plan called for a site a few miles further upriver, in a mostly residential area. This was scrapped because it would have displaced many thousands more people than the mostly industrial site that was eventually

chosen. The developer (one of Shanghai's largest) who built the apartment complexes that many of the displaced residents moved into is proud that they are only 2.5 kms away from the original village.

Shanghai Expo 2010, like Expo 86 in Vancouver, was built on former industrial urban waterfront. Vancouver's False Creek was once home to milling industry and production, as well as tracks and service shops owned by the Canadian National Railway, until the mid-1980s when the last businesses were shut to make way for the Expo. The Shanghai Expo was built on 5.28 square kms on the north (Puxi) and south (Pudong) sides of the river. In Puxi, the Jiangnan shipyard, built in 1865 and one of China's oldest, was dismantled and operations moved to the Changxing "Ship Building Island" at the eastern edge of the city. The Pudong side contained a working Krups steel factory and related businesses; at least 19,000 people living in several hutong-type villages that had been there for more than 40 years. Similarly to False Creek, the idea of air pollution was publicly invoked as a justification for clearing the area.

Expos, Olympics, and other mega-events have almost always been used to affect change. They are used to further government and business agendas under the rubric of "revitalization," which ranges from urban renewal to slum clearance. These events can result in public amenities like transportation — Vancouver's SkyTrain was a result of Expo 86, which had a transportation theme, and the Canada Line to the airport was built in time for the 2010 Winter Olympics — and parks — New York City's World Fairs helped Robert Moses turn an ash dump into the City's largest park. However, these events are also used deliberately to remove unwanted places and people who are not considered by governments to be as valuable as potential real estate development. This has included low-income or homeless people, marginalized populations including people of color, small businesses, working industrial areas, low-rise housing

and more. Displacement resulting from mega-events is so rampant that the Center for Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), an international human rights NGO, recently released a major report condemning governments for this practice. The report laid out stakeholder guidelines for creating affordable housing legacies and promoting human rights rather than destroying them.

COHRE's statistics are damning: more than 1.25 million people evicted and displaced during the Beijing Olympics, 720,000 people evicted for the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, 30,000 people suffered from secondary displacement in Atlanta, 18,000 people affected on the Shanghai Expo site and 400,000 in secondary displacement and gentrification from development projects around the city, 300,000 people evicted for the 2010 Commonwealth Games in New Dehli, and up to 2000 low-income housing units lost during Expo 86 in Vancouver, as landlords took advantage of the opportunity to rent to visitors, evicting low-income, elderly and disabled people.

During Vancouver's Winter Olympic Games, activists and organizers kept the housing crisis in the spotlight. They even secured housing for dozens of unhoused people through a visible campaign that included pitching a tent city in a vacant lot owned by Concorde Pacific, Vancouver's largest developer and sponsor of the Games. However, the City's pledge to create new affordable housing, from a significant percentage of the Millenium Water development (formerly the Athlete's Village), failed. Cost overruns and bad financing decisions caused the city to cut the number of affordable apartments originally promised and spend millions more to finish the remaining units. This created a backlash as some Vancouverites questioned why low-income people deserved to live in prime waterfront real estate, ignoring the fact that, just across False Creek, Concorde Pacific's waterfront development includes a

CHILD POVERTY
WOMENS POVERTY
HOMES FOR ALL
Spirit of the Site
POLYSULPHIDE
FENZI

percentage of affordable housing (although as a private development, most people are unsure exactly what percentage, or where it is).

During the Olympics, Canadian regional pavilions were located on a swath of land owned by Concorde Pacific. Rainbow-colored banners advertising this "community celebration zone" and Concorde's "shaping horizons for the future" hid chain link fences that separated the public walkway from the concourse, and that from infrastructure and outdoor storage. Concorde opened up its real estate sales pavilion to the general public in order to display its architectural models and carefully crafted slogans for new communities, built alongside Olympic infrastructure such as the Canada Line and the widened Sea to Sky highway.

The centerpiece of the pavilion was a city model centered on False Creek North, the former site of Expo 86. Concorde Pacific acquired the land for a relatively low price during a period of government consolidation and divestment of False Creek land. Visitors could circumnavigate the model and were allowed to take photographs, a practice previously forbidden to tourists. One's focus was drawn to several buildings at False Creek's Eastern edge, made from Lucite and lit from below. These were the same buildings pictured on the banners — Concorde's plan for 2020, for the future. Here, the model is not a record of what is, but what will be. But like the Beijing and Shanghai models, the fantasy it offers belies the on-the-ground reality of the displacement that helped create it.

Rob Hornstra and Arnold van Bruggen

Skating Among Palm Trees

The 2014 Winter Games will be held in a subtropical seaside resort, full of abandoned sanatoria on the border with conflict zone Abkhazia. Over the coming five years, this region will change beyond recognition. We believe it is of great journalistic importance that the run-up to such a major international event receive sustained and in-depth coverage. Dutch newspapers and magazines do not have the budget or manpower to realize a project of this scale. That's why we are planning to do it ourselves through our crowd-funded documentary project, "The Sochi Project."

If you take the train from Moscow to Sochi, you pass by thirty-seven continuous hours of birch forests, wheat fields, farms, factories, abandoned land and here and there a village or town. Thick drifts of snow lie everywhere. The local people walk through it, blowing clouds of steam, dressed in black trousers, jumpers, coats with fur collars and warm

Bik Van der Pol has worked collaboratively since 1995 to explore the potential of art to produce and transmit knowledge. Their practice was recently recognized with the 2010 Contemporanea Enel Award.

Stuart Elden is Professor of Political Geography at Durham University and the writer and editor of several books and journals like *Terror and Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

Alissa Firth-Eagland is an independent curator, writer and the former Director/Curator of Media Arts at the Western Front. In 2011, she is participating in residencies ViaFarini (Milan, IT) and Cité Internationale des Arts (Paris, FR).

Candice Hopkins is the Sobey Curatorial Resident, Indigenous Art, at the National Gallery of Canada and the former Director/Curator of Exhibitions at the Western Front, Vancouver.

Am Johal is a social activist and independent writer whose work has appeared in *Seven Oaks Magazine, Z Magazine, Georgia Straight, Electronic Intifada, Arena Magazine, Inter Press Service* and many others.

Caitlin Jones is the Executive Director of the Western Front Society in Vancouver. She previously held a curatorial and conservation position at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and was Director of Programming at the Bryce Wolkowitz Gallery in New York.

Lize Mogel is an interdisciplinary artist working with the interstices between art and cultural geography. Exhibitions include the Gwangju (South Korea) and Sharjah (U.A.E.) Biennials, PS1 (NYC), Casco (Utrecht), and Experimental Geography (ICI, touring).

Pelin Tan is a sociologist, art historian and writer based in Istanbul. She is author of *Unconditional Hospitality* and *Threshold Architecture* (Architecture and Urban Studies MA Program, Nuremberg Art Academy, 2011).

Myka Tucker-Abramson is a PhD student and union activist at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Urban Subjects is a cultural collective formed in 2005 by Sabine Bitter, Jeff Derksen, and Helmut Weber to develop research-based, artistic projects focused on urban issues. They are currently developing an international exhibition on the urban aftermath of Olympics and Expos, *Where the World Was: Cities After Global Mega-events*.

Arnold van Bruggen is a writer and filmmaker based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. **Rob Hornstra** is a photographer based in Utrecht, The Netherlands. In 2009, they started *The Sochi Project,* an online, crowd-funded documentary project.

Jerry Zaslove is a founding faculty member of Simon Fraser University. He has taught European literature, humanities and the social history of art at Simon Fraser University since it opened in 1965.

Index of Images

Page	Photo Credit
i	Urban Subjects
ii	Bitter/Weber
iii	Andrew Lee
2	Andrew Lee
9	Bitter/Weber
14	
19	Bik Van der Pol
23	Pacific Press Archives
25	Bik Van der Pol
30	Urban Subjects: *The Fisherman* UBC Special Collections
34	Kevin Schmidt
37	Bitter/Weber
38	Bitter/Weber
47	Interior, *I Confess I Care* Kevin Schmidt
48 & 52	Jerry Zaslove provided this photograph of Herbert Marcuse at SFU. Photo by Wayne Wiens.
54	Kevin Schmidt
57	Urban Subjects. Provided by Jerry Zaslove
62	Bitter/Weber
68	Urban Subjects From www.no2010.com
71	Bitter/Weber
73	Kevin Schmidt
76	Bitter/Weber
83	Bik Van der Pol
88	Bitter/Weber
97	Bik Van der Pol
102	Andrew Lee

Momentarily: Learning from Mega-Events

The Western Front, Vancouver, Canada

Momentarily: Learning from Mega-Events began with a shared interest in the impacts of the 2010 Olympic Games on Vancouver, at a time when this city has been noted as especially livable. This project exists within several forms, each increasingly visible: a residency, an exhibition that commissioned two new works, a symposium with more than thirty speakers, and now this publication. Through multiple textual forms — from semi-fiction to interview to theoretical historical examination — this publication explodes first doubts and curiosities.

Residency

January 1 to February 3, 2010
Bik Van der Pol

Exhibition

In Dialogue
January 30 to March 6, 2010
Bik Van der Pol and Urban Subjects
Curated by Alissa Firth-Eagland and Johan Lundh

Symposium

Learning from Vancouver
January 29 to 31, 2010

Bik Van der Pol, Clint Burnham, Paul de Guzman, Hadley + Maxwell, Candice Hopkins, Fiona Jeffries, Am Johal, Laiwan, Randy Lee Cutler, Kristina Lee Podesva, Glen Lowry, Tom Sherman, Matthew Soules, Monika Szewczyk, Althea Thauberger, Henry Tsang, Urban Subjects: Jeff Derksen, Sabine Bitter and Helmut Weber, and Amy Zion.

Curated by Alissa Firth-Eagland and Johan Lundh.

Publication

Momentarily: Learning from Mega-Events
Western Front, 2011
ISBN: 978-0-920974-49-0
Editors Bik Van der Pol, Alissa Firth-Eagland and Urban Subjects.
Managing Editor Alissa Firth-Eagland. Texts by Bik Van der Pol, Bitter/Weber, Jeff Derksen, Stuart Elden, Alissa Firth-Eagland, Candice Hopkins, Am Johal, Lize Mogel, Pelin Tan, Myka Tucker-Abramson, Rob Hornstra and Arnold van Bruggen, and Jerry Zaslove.
Editorial assistance from Derek Brunen. Designed by Karianne Blank.

Acknowledgements

Along with the editors, Derek Brunen whipped these texts into shape, and Karianne Blank brought all the disparate elements together in her sensitive and intelligent design. We thank them wholeheartedly for their shared enthusiasm and caring eyes. We are deeply indebted to the Western Front for supporting this complex and ambitious project. Our special thanks go to Executive Director Caitlin Jones for her patience, persistence and encouragement, to Media Arts Curator Sarah Todd for her forward planning throughout the publication process, and to Andrew Lee, Kevin Schmidt and Mandy Ginson for their attention to documentation. We also thank Johan Lundh for his work as co-curator of the Exhibition and the Symposium. Last but not least, we wish to recognize the authors, without whom this project would not exist.

The Western Front gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the BC Arts Council through the Government of British Columbia, the City of Vancouver, Direct Access Gaming, our members and volunteers.

Impressum

Momentarily: Learning From Mega-Events was printed in 1000 copies and released in print and on the Western Front's website (www.front.bc.ca/momentarily) on April 17, 2011.
Typeset in Serifa on Standard Newsprint. Printed in BC at Horizon Printers.

Western Front

Published by the Western Front with generous support from the Canada Council for the Arts Media Arts Dissemination Project Grant and the Mondriaan Foundation, as well as the BC Arts Council and the City of Vancouver.