ON MUTABLE SOCIOLOGY IN THE CITY

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Go into the city.
See what is happening.
Try to read the space.

Looking at a city is similar to approaching a person.
Is it introverted? Is it extroverted?
How much interaction is needed?

Cities function differently during different times.
See the city in the morning, see the city in the afternoon,
see the city at night.
Come back the next day and do the same.
Visit the city in summer and winter
and come back in fall and spring.

Do not only look, speak to the city via its people.
Talk to all kinds of people, not only your people
They are stakeholders, contributors, inhabitants, citizens.

What are you missing in your city?
What are everyday problems? Or challenges?
How do people make use of the city?
How to describe a place?

One can think of the city in three aspects:
HOW IT LOOKS
HOW IT FUNCTIONS
HOW IT FEELS
(They don't always align)

Document how it looks.
Document how it functions.
Documents how it feels.
Look at it properly.
Look at it closely.
Revisit again.

Sometimes it helps to find a pattern:
Doorways, signs, decoration, furniture,
facades, plants, materials, colors, shops,
offices, balconies, roofs, construction sites,
public buildings, social infrastructures, public spaces,
pedestrians, cyclists, traffic flows, markets
and human behavior.

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Interviews can be a tool to understand the city.
In interviews it is important to listen.
Give people space to speak.
Do not assume what is not there.

Leave a note with your question and your contact.
Be kind.
Give people time and they will eventually get back
to you with something that will inform you.

If you want to speak about the city
and you want citizens to be involved,
your language must be clear.
Plain language makes it easier for the public
to read, understand, and to engage.

Enter a dialog to understand a place.
Spend all week at Cultures of Assembly.
Place chairs in front of the space.
Invite passers-by. Serve tea.
People will understand you are there
and that you are interested in them.

You can build a whole city with words.
Every word is like a brick.

FELIX GANZER is an Austrian architect, activist and artist developing sustainable construction prototypes, establishing social infrastructures and supporting political engagement. He has worked at the architectural offices Dunkelschwarz in Salzburg and b+ in Berlin. Recent projects are the community project KOKO, collaborative constructions, as a part of the Salzkammergut Cultural Capital 2024, Head of Architecture & Urban Planning at children's play city Mini-München and activating public space with SuperHof. Felix Ganzer is co-founder of Bürgerliste Hallein, a political citizens group and Bürgerinitiative Hallein, a citizens initiative advocating for empowerment of citizens. Together with Matylda Krzykowski he is currently transforming a 600 year old house in Hallein into a prototype for cultural heritage construction.

MATYLDA KRZYKOWSKI is a Polish-German transdisciplinary practitioner working with spaces, exhibitions, installations, scenographies, public talks, and public engaging formats. Recent projects are the co-curation of Institution Building at CIVIC Brussels, the curation of The Energy Show at Het Nieuwe Instituut Rotterdam, scripting and hosting Airtime, a 'TV Show' on (Swiss) Design and the installation You Don't Want Space, You Want To Fill It at Marsèll in Milan. Krzykowski teaches Choreography may refer to the design itself at Critical Inquiry Lab at Design Academy Eindhoven and Show Your Work at MA Design at HKB Bern. Since 2022 Krzykowski is the Artistic Director of CIVIC, an educational and experimental environment, at Basel Academy of Art and Design FHNW.

RECOMMENDED READING:
Venkatesh, S. (2008). *Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets*. Penguin Books.