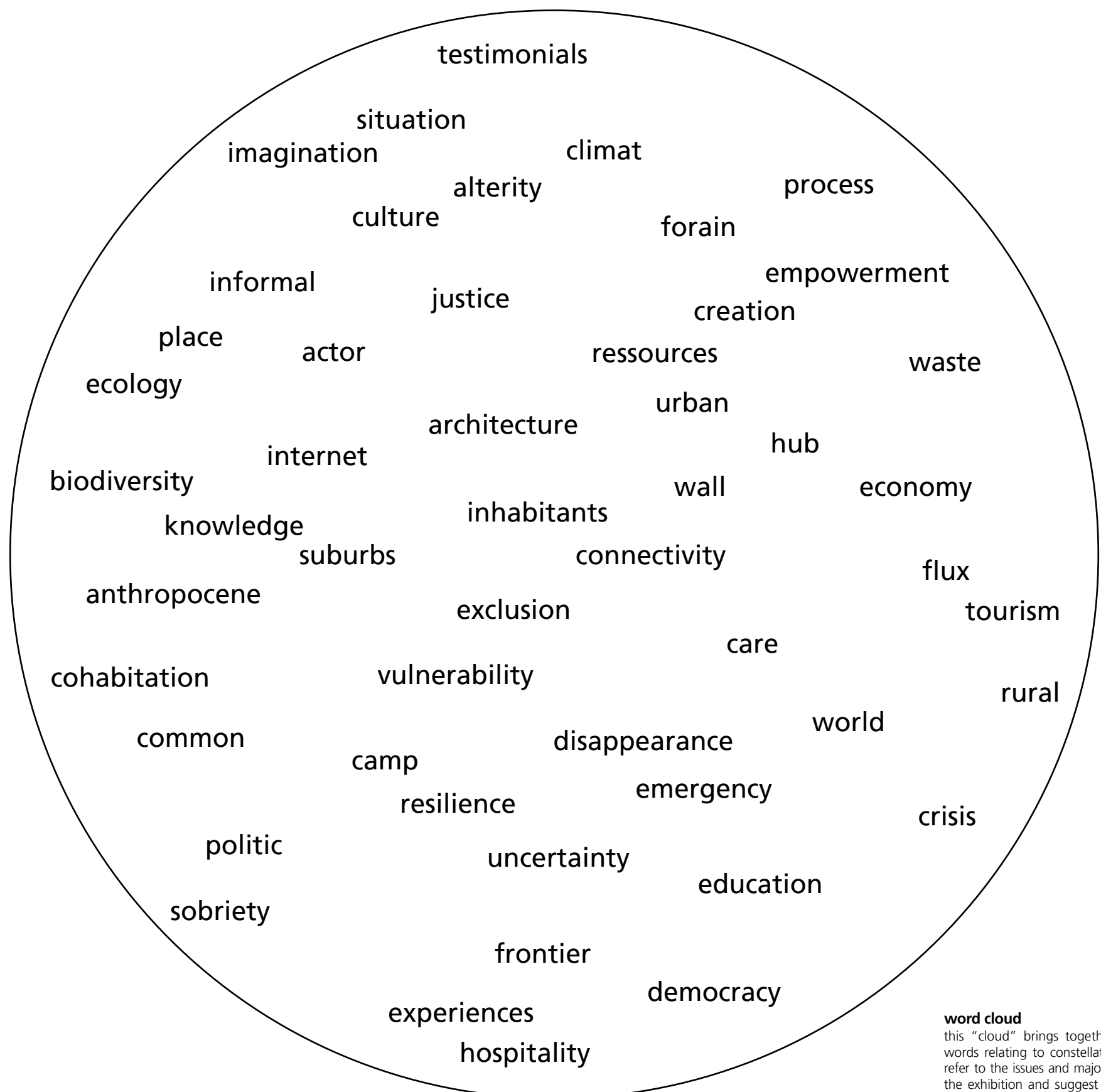


The world is changing, and the ways of inhabiting it are changing too. More than ever, architecture, cities, and the tangible and intangible territories of human habitation must be considered in the light of what no longer exists and what has not yet happened.

arc en rêve centre d'architecture

constellation.s



word cloud

this “cloud” brings together the key words relating to constellation.s. They refer to the issues and major themes of the exhibition and suggest what gives meaning to today’s world: some shine like beacons to guide us, while others indicate dead ends and pitfalls.

a glossary to help you on your journey through constellation.s

by Michel Lussault, geographer

glossary

this glossary gives you the keys to interpreting the exhibition. It explains the meanings of terms essential for describing and understanding new ways of inhabiting the world.

ANTHROPOCENE

We are living in a new “geological” era called the anthropocene because of the major role played by human activities in the global changes affecting the planet. Global warming, declining biodiversity, and increasing scarcity of resources will lead to radical transformations in the way humans inhabit the World. The recognition of this anthropocene represents a crucial point where individuals and societies become aware of their vulnerability and their direct involvement in that vulnerability. The change is both global and local, as are the analysis that has to be made and the action that must be taken.

CARE

The word “care” is interesting for its multiple meanings: one can take care of something, and one can take care over an activity, for example. Joan Tronto defines it as an activity “*that includes everything we do to maintain, perpetuate and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible*”. Care is a basic principle of human life. It extends to what is around us: all the human and non-human realities that surround us. Creating relationships between the different components of individual and social life is at the heart of the development of spatial and environmental care.

HUB

“Hubs” are places that make it possible to connect several spaces of different scales and different kinds. Airports and stations are prime examples of hubs: they create a tangible and intangible connection between a very large variety of spaces that potentially intersect and interact. This is why this type of facility is so important in contemporary urban planning. The development of tangible and intangible flows explains this. But hubs also respond to a desire to control several spaces of different sizes at once—which is what a mobile phone allows you to do, for example.

COMMONALITY/Common

“Commonality” results from what is pooled by key social operators in the framework of their activities. Because it requires the joint commitment of individuals, commonality is fundamentally political. It is also specific to each situation that gives rise to it: it arises in practice, including in activities that affect our daily lives. Commonality involves new forms of extended citizenship that are not restricted to taking part in elections.

CONNECTIVITY

“Connectivity” refers to the many possibilities for connections that are available to a given individual, group or space. Contemporary societies are influenced by a thriving culture of connectivity, which affects all areas of individual, social and family life, in particular via Internet. It is striking that the most emblematic global companies mostly base their business on an ability to connect people to each other and to the things that interest them. Microsoft, Apple, Facebook, Google, Twitter and many others sell and promote not so much instruments as intangible services expressing and magnifying a universal culture of apparently unrestricted, if not uncontrolled, contact.

EMPOWERMENT

“Empowerment” refers to a mobilisation process that is both political and educational and which makes it possible to enhance the actions of individuals who are initially on the margins of design and decision-making systems. Empowerment can allow a subordinate to become actively involved in a collective initiative, for example. Applied to urban planning, empowerment involves recognition of inhabitant expertise, and it is an instrument that can help us to respond to the requirements of spatial justice.

“FORAIN”

The French word “forain” refers, in this instance, to itinerant and non-permanent urban installations. The principle of non-permanence is essential to this way of inhabiting a space. Fragility and lightness hold the potential for creativity, and they also encourage people to take care of common spaces. The term “forain” also suggests spatial flexibility and fitout reversibility; developing a living environment thus appears as a necessarily unfinished process where what matters is the way people actually inhabit the space, however perfect or imperfect that space may be in formal terms.

INHABITING

The term “inhabiting” refers to all forms of experience and occupation of space by individuals and groups. To “inhabit” is not just to live somewhere; it also involves moving and connecting. Day by day, equipped with skills and driven by values and imagination, each inhabitant organises the subtle combination of materials and ideas that makes up his or her “habitat”. What do humans do? They inhabit, constantly and on all scales—that of the body, that of housing, that of mobility, and that of the World. More precisely, they permanently co-habit with all other humans—and thus face the political challenge of how inhabited space can be shared.

IMAGINATION

The way individuals and societies relate to living environments cannot be reduced to a functional or utilitarian relationship. It is also sensitive and emotional: it involves ideas, representations, and values. All this comes together as a form of geographical “imagination” that is both individual and social, and which is expressed and mediated via narratives, discourse, and images. This imagination makes it possible to describe and conceive the conditions for inhabiting space, and opens up a repertory of possible actions *in situ* for an individual or a group.

INFORMAL

An act or a spatial reality is considered “informal” when it escapes explicit public regulations and standards and lies outside the official market. In many situations, informality is omnipresent: it is even the normal regime for many urban processes, especially in economic and residential terms. Informality is often presented as the result of a need to survive when faced with poverty or corruption; however it often also arises from rational choices made because of the advantages it brings—even if such choices may lead to illegal practices.

SPATIAL JUSTICE

In the face of growing inequality, social justice promotes the principle of fairness in the way goods are divided up or in terms of access to resources. By analogy with John Rawls’ *Theory of Justice*, “spatial justice” can be defined as a way of organising geographical space that allows us to provide maximum access to urban amenities and public assets to everyone, including the least privileged members of society. This

principle, which has to be redefined to fit every situation, should be one of the main preoccupations of housing policies.

PLACE

In the social sciences, a “place” is where a range of social realities (human and non-human realities and material constructions) are brought together in direct contact with one another and integrated into the limited space that contains them and gives them their meaning and function(s). “Places” manifest themselves via the explicit and tangible nature of their limits and the threshold and crossover effects that result from those limits. In a “place”, the individual makes himself seen: he agrees to be looked at by others and to leave the family and domestic sphere. Globalisation restores the importance of “place”, which constitute essential environments for communal life. “Places” are new magnets for globalised human life, and they both anchor and drive contemporary forms of cohabitation.

WORLD

The World is the social space deployed by human habitation, which is now planetary. The advent of the World began a few decades ago, defining a new way of organising space that differs from all previous situations in terms of the modes of existence of human societies. Widespread urbanisation is the main constituent force of this World, via the spatial arrangements it produces and the imagination, knowledge and ideologies it cultivates.

RESTRAINT

Here, “restraint” refers to the optimum operation of inhabited spaces: it involves consuming as few resources as possible to meet the needs of the greatest number—including those needs that relate to celebrations, culture and excess, which are necessary for a society to breathe. Restraint is not the same as self-sufficiency, abstinence, or degrowth. It involves a successful combination of individual desire, efficiency, control of resources, and social justice. It opens up a way to reinvent democracy in the framework of a common political project that is both local and global.



© Cédric Delsaux / Xingu Hut, amazon rainforest, Brasil 2008



© NASA / Apollo 8, 24 dec. 1968, Earthrise



© Google – Connie Zhou / Data centers



© Philippe Ruault – GHI Bordeaux, 2016

theoretical contributions

by Fabienne Brugère
and Guillaume le Blanc, philosophers

ordinary / foreign

There is a worrying strangeness in ordinariness that relates not only to its ceaseless repetition, but also to its fleeting, shifting refrains that seem, at some point in reality, to throw the most regular arrangements out of line. The incorporation of routine is not the opposite of the transcendence of foreignness; it can give rise to it. Inhabiting means repeating a thread, a furrow; it also, in the same movement, means leaving intact the law of evaporation, the love of tangents. All “heres” are interwoven with “elsewhere”, and, in a similar pattern, routines allow themselves to be carried away into the distance.

visible / invisible

The visible does not exist as a quality of the visual, an extension of sight. It is a selection of what deserves to be seen and lets a thousand appearances drop into the shadows, into invisibility. This means we have to challenge the way the visible is manufactured and wonder why the visible maintains doubtful forms in invisibility: elements of the furniture of the world. But one can also inhabit the world by dodging the imperative of social visibility that performs lives. Becoming invisible is a law of social damnation, but not everybody can do it either. Many want to appear, but some strive to disappear.

humanity / nature

One might think that the unlimited extension of the area of human habitation had pushed nature back so far as to make it disappear. This is not the case. It is reinvented, on the contrary, as a quality of humanity, like a form of habitation. From communal gardens to green suburbs to forests suspended between two buildings, we really are “beyond nature and culture”. Henceforth, each society creates areas of friction between them to build an ecological niche of a new kind, where the highest artifice competes with the most immediate naturalness.

philosophy

the point of view of philosophy creates perspectives that lie off the beaten track, helping to establish alternative approaches to inhabiting the world. By associating pairs of words that respond to each other more than they conflict with one another, these contributions give rise to questions that make constellation.s into a rhythmic series of points of view regarding the world.

resistance / resilience

Inhabiting means confronting a world that resists, a material that is already there, solid, intact, and which shatters hopes of transformation in advance. But it also means showing resilience, that ability to resurface despite crises, trauma or ordeals. Migrants, who leave a country where they can no longer live and move to another, show resilience. In more radical terms, resistance disturbs the most firmly established patterns, allows individuals to invent subtle new particles that scatter in the air and make the atmosphere less stifling. All life is a confrontation in space and time between resistance and resilience.

permanent / unstable

What if the unstable were more important than the permanent? What if the permanent were just a temporary instability that has not yet collapsed, for want of something better? Above all in our times, which we experience as uncertain? Of course, the permanence of materials seems to muzzle the energy of instability, but sustainability is a question that collides with the common unchallenged rules of consumer societies. All civilisations are still made of sand; and a habitation is an apparently permanent but deeply unstable form, prey to the folly of new beginnings which, far from being pathologies or ways of running away from existence, are the often advanced signs of matchless creativity.

speeding up / slowing down

Inhabiting means finding the right pace: it means moving neither too slowly, nor too fast. The permanent acceleration we are promised in major global cities often ends up with deliberate deceleration processes: slowing down flows, taking one’s time, and looking after oneself are not just breaks, but postures adopted by the athletes of daily life. Feeling the possibility of a change of pace is one of the great privileges of the city: running to escape acceleration, slowing down to get out of the flow, dreaming instead of sleeping, or on the contrary connecting oneself to global speed.



1

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2

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3

© Kéré Architecture



4

© Beyond Entropy



7

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To "inhabit" means to settle somewhere, to meet other people, to move around, and to experience emotion in the spaces and timespans of our lives.



8

© Ishan Tankha



9

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12

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13

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14

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Tangible and intangible connections are everywhere, creating new cultures of space that are reshaping the places we live in. They are as diverse, multiform and shifting as sea foam.

Humans, objects, materials, animals and plants all help us to understand the world and the way we build our living environment.



19

© Cristóbal Palma



20

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21

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26

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At a time when urban development is becoming ever more widespread and when movement takes place on a global scale, unique places are emerging, making us stop short and reflect upon new ways of experiencing and thinking about the world: new ways of living and behaving in it.



27

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Multiple anchor points, increased mobility, endless connections... The Nation-State alone is no longer relevant. New ways of living in the world call for new political regulatory frameworks.



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Doing as much as possible with as little as possible, without going too far. In response to illusions of omnipotence, a form of creative sobriety is being invented every day, based on an awareness that endless possibilities exist.



© Didier Faustino

Imagination is a political force. It encourages people to act, and drives both feelings and values. It is a transformative force that highlights collective challenges and produces a narrative for our shared future.



© Manuel Herz



© FABULOUS URBAN

Inequalities and vulnerabilities are increasing. Living environments, in all their diversity, welcome us and offer resources for action. Taking care of them is a requirement of spatial justice.



© Lionel Billiet

The notion of the individual asserts itself as the fundamental entity of urban societies. Though independent and unique, the individual is also connected in many different ways, and is eager to contribute to the common good.



© Assemble



© Future Cities Lab / Carline Teteris



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Economic parameters are part of the solution, not the problem. We must rethink the rules of the urban economy, opening up alternatives to a world all too often shaped by profit and speculation.



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Taking the words and actions of residents seriously. The challenge is to recognise the competence of individuals and their political right to take part in constructing living environments.



© Philippe Ruault



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Climate change, declining biodiversity, scarce resources: the Anthropocene, the new geological era we are now entering, shows the influence of Man on the global bio-physical system. It calls for a radical transformation of the forms and processes of human habitation.

constellation.s

exhibition, lectures

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theoretical contributions

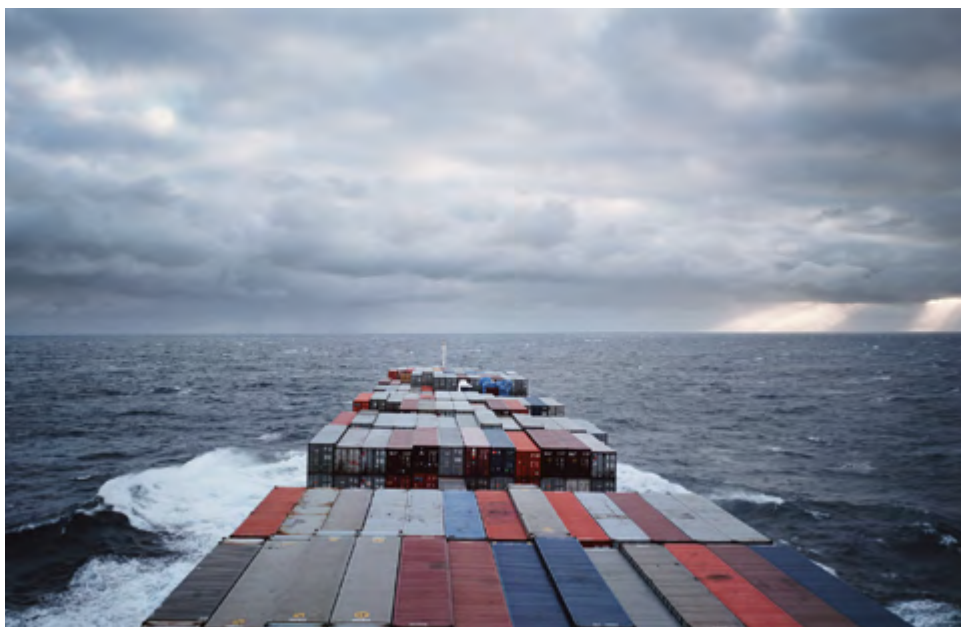
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- Fabienne Brugère, philosopher
- Guillaume le Blanc, philosopher
- Cynthia Fleury, philosopher, psychoanalyst
- Michel Agier, anthropologist
- Judith Revel, philosopher
- Geneviève Azam, economist
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the team

Michel Lussault, geographer, arc en rêve president
Francine Fort, director – general curator
Michel Jacques, artistic director, exhibit designer

research & coordination
Wenwen Cai, architect
Eric Dordan, architect

texts
Félix Mulle, architect
Théo Fort-Jacques, geographer

exhibit design
Cyrille Brisou, designer
Daniel le Hérisse, foreman
Pauline Kerzerho, architect
Ludovic Gillon, architect
Emmanuelle Maura, graphic designer

production assistants
Éloïse Roch, **Marina Tolstoukhine**,
Luc Sanciaume

public relations
Joëlle Dubois, PR manager
Marie-Christine Mendy, layout artist

education
Sara Meunier, architect

lectures coordination
Anastassia Deltcheva

administration
Adrien Bensignor, general secretary

special collaborations
Loup Niboyet, graphic designer
Marie Bruneau & Bertrand Genier, graphic designers
Éric Troussicot, architect

the entire arc en rêve team,
+ associates, interns, students and volunteers

students from Lycée des métiers Léonard-de-Vinci
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landscaping, design,
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every day, all year round,
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Michel Lussault geographer,
scientific direction

Francine Fort director

Michel Jacques artistic director

assisted by

Wenwen Cai architect

Eric Dordan architect

theoretical contributions

Fabienne Brugère philosopher

Guillaume le Blanc philosopher

exhibition

02 June > 25 September 2016

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press – public relations

contact: Joëlle Dubois
33 (0)5 56 52 78 36
joelledubois@arcenreve.com

constellations.arcenreve.com

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@arcenreve



information

arc en rêve centre d'architecture
Entrepôt 7, rue Ferrère

F-33000 Bordeaux

+33 5 56 52 78 36

info@arcenreve.com

arcenreve.com

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In response to the global transformations that are changing the conditions in which we live, **constellation.s** will present individual and collective initiatives that suggest perspectives, with respect to tomorrow's challenges, for how we make cities. In response to fear, identitarian closure and extremism, **constellation.s** intends to use critical thinking to understand the world we live in. In response to the current surfeit of images, discourse, and spectacle, **constellation.s** offers examples of creativity and of how ordinary people are inventing their daily lives. **constellation.s** will present multi-disciplinary points of view: from researchers, writers, architects, engineers and economic leaders who are reflecting upon the realities of our era. **constellation.s** will feature experiments, testimonials, processes and situations which, in the four corners of the world, shed light on possible new horizons for living together in our complex societies. Here and there all over the world, practices are emerging that challenge and undermine old certainties. Strategies embracing the unstable and the uncertain, the tangible and the intangible, are changing the uses and production methods of architecture.

It is these micro-phenomena, this constellation of micro-initiatives, that the exhibition, events and publications set out to highlight. We know that the crisis we are experiencing cannot be reduced to economic or social parameters alone. It is also, and above all, a political, ecological and cultural crisis that calls for a change in civilisation. This means that it is vital to place culture and knowledge at the heart of the challenges of community awareness and democracy to light the way for the future of our societies. Because the primary purpose of architecture is to provide Mankind with somewhere to live, it must be thought of in relation to actual use, and it must be produced with the inhabitants themselves. To forge connections and create meaningful places, it must reinvent the way it relates to the world. **constellation.s** will provide a forum for thought, in order to make the new conditions for human habitation intelligible; it will highlight practices that take the risk of making the future meaningful; and it will provide an opportunity to share innovative processes that can point to new ways of inhabiting the world.

Francine Fort

director, arc en rêve centre d'architecture

Thank you for your collaboration

Centre de cultures Bordeaux Métropole – Centre de formation d'apprentis du BTP Gironde Blanquefort
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