# Temporary Use 2.0, A tool for planning and developing the new urban context

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# What can temporary use do in urban planning?

Temporary urban spaces and land uses are gaining more and more interest in the field of urban planning in both theory and practice. Temporary uses are often implemented on former industrial sites, which hold great potential for the development and testing of new ideas. Temporary planning is less restricted and allows one to think more freely, maybe even to dare a little more? It is also a way to test ideas out in full scale, before making permanent solutions.

In practice, the growing focus on the development potentials in temporary urban spaces has triggered increased political awareness and thereby ensured the subject of temporary uses a place as a future focus area in municipal planning.

Temporary urban spaces are gaining ever more footing and acceptance on the political agenda as a result of their potential for creating eventful, cultural and creative urban environments. This political focus on temporary urban space is an indication of general urban regulations and development tendencies characterized by cultural planning, leisure, economy, collaborative planning and an increased focus on everyday life. Particularly economic parameters related to leisure such as creativity, culture, urban life and experiences are highly prioritized on the interurban municipal agenda, with temporary uses as a concrete development tool. An interesting dichotomy has also arisen between the uses of temporary space as a tool for social planning by urban designers as opposed to the use of temporary space by politicians as a vehicle for economic gain through leisure spaces.

This paper will focus on the phenomenon of Temporary Use as a city-political focus area now and in the future as well as the use of the temporary as a planning tool. Several case studies will be used to illustrate these topics.



In its direct definition the 'temporary' represents the non-permanent, something that has a time restriction. When we talk about 'temporary use' in urban planning it becomes more than just the non-permanent. It becomes something less restricted, which allows you to think more freely and allows you to dare a little more. The temporary also becomes an opportunity to test ideas out, in the open and is a great kick-start in the process towards the more permanent. It is dynamic and can even stimulate local economies. It is gaining greater interest in the field of urban planning as a tool in the strategic planning process.

The temporary use of urban space holds great potential for the development and testing of new things. It has the ability to activate empty urban space, former industrial sites and other run-down areas, providing a new perspective on redundant spaces.

For many reasons the temporary use of urban space is gaining more and more political interest. It is becoming a trend in urban planning and urban development in general.

# Why has it become such a political focus area?

As our societies are changing from industrial to knowledge-based societies, the physical layout of our cities are changing to. The post-industrial society left a great amount of centralized, unused and run-down areas within our cities. In our current time of economical crisis, financial resources are limited for the redevelopment and investment of these redundant brownfield sites. This is when the application of the 'temporary' is at its best, offering a cost-effective and easy opportunity for activating and bringing life into these empty areas.

The increased political focus on temporary use is due to the dynamic and less expensive nature of the term in activating otherwise dead areas. It is easily implemented and just as easy to reverse it if it doesn't work. It shows empowerment and it is a great opportunity to gain knowledge on local societies.

The increased political awareness is also an indication of general urban regulations and development tendencies, and an increased focus on everyday life. Especially leisure

economic parameters are highly prioritized.

But all of this political interest also brings challenges. The political agenda adds another value to the 'temporary', providing a greater focus on the leisure-economical potentials, rather than on the social and urban possibilities. The risk of the increased political popularity of the 'temporary' is also linked to various forms of urban transformation with everything being a temporary project without it pointing forward towards the more permanent.

## What can we use it for?

The 'temporary' can be used as an effective tool in the planning process, expanding the sites "opening hours", providing a safer environment and inviting people to use the area in a new way.

The temporary can help **kick-start** the transformation of a place - creating a living, creative and innovative urban environment. It can be used in **testing an idea**, a transformation of an urban space. Staging **temporary events** is also an effective application of the tool. Temporary use is a generator of new activities, giving a place new identity, playing a new role in people's mind. It offers a freedom. It can easily be changed or moved, if it is not successful. Even though the term is linked to something non-permanent, with a time restriction, it does give some long-term possibilities. It presents an opportunity to test and gain knowledge on a proposed project. This ensures that the project has a greater chance of success than of failure. The temporary can strengthen communities and stimulate local economies, particularly user-driven initiatives.

## How did it become so popular?

The temporary is giving today's city planning a positive discourse but also holds a paradox in being both a product of times of transformation, uneven social growth and the stagnation of the global economy. And on the other side a producer of new urban and political tendencies.

Temporary offers a less expensive, easier and more dynamic way of developing cities, which is in the interest of the political and municipal planning. It presents the opportunity of developing areas, in spite of economical stagnation.

Political support for the 'temporary' can also be stimulated by personal gain and possible reelection for a politician. A politician can be the one that introduces a temporary project and then be responsible for its success. However he or she can also revoke the idea, gaining community support and respect should the project be unsuccessful. It is a political win-win situation.

On the other hand the temporary gives the everyday user of the urban space a sense of involvement and ownership, which provides a feeling of democracy. The temporary in its informal and self-governing environment also appeals to certain resourceful group in our society, called the urban pioneers.

## Can we use it as a planning tool?

What temporary use brings to the table is that it makes it possible to work with several aspects in urban planning at once. Instead of traditional planning - just working with the

physical layout of a place, it is possible to also work with the use of it, and its story at the same time. This enhances the opportunity for the successful transformation of a place that is not only focusing on the physical level but also puts people in the equation of planning.

It seems that all parties in urban planning including politicians, landowners and citizens all agree that it is a good idea and holds great potential and possibilities. The temporary adds social, cultural and economical value to an area, however we have to realize and be ready to accept that there are two sides to the coin.

These include the self-grown temporary activities, with their informal and non-controlled character and the traditional top-down urban planning. These two sides will challenge each other. To prevent them working against each other, we need to take the best of both worlds and use it, in order to find new ways for successful urban planning. It has already been made possible in several different types of projects all around the world on both macro and micro-scales, some of which will be discussed in this paper.

## Who are the potential players?

As described earlier, temporary urban space offers cultural, economical, social and physical potentials. It is creating possibilities for developing new sustainable urban structures, cultures and networks that lead to many different platforms of creativity and innovation, and also tie in with new contact to the everyday life in the local community. This is a constellation that holds great potential in creating more lively and eventful environments in the urban space.

Historically the potential players temporary use interventions consisted of urban pioneers – those that are drawn by the open undefined character of these often forgotten and leftover spaces.

However, with its increased popularity of the past few years, the spectrum of game players has expanded. These include politicians, municipalities, citizens, community groups and property developers.

### Are there different types of temporary use?

The term temporary use is becoming more and more complex as some activities only take place in a transition period while others become more permanent. This paper has categorized temporary uses into three key areas: A activating tool, a testing tool and an event tool. The temporary use does not have a scale, it can affect smaller places or lead to a transformation of larger urban areas.

This paper will provide some real life examples of Temporary Spaces in Copenhagen, Denmark.



CASE STUDY; EVENTS – Bernhard Bangs Summer Street Camp festival<sup>1</sup> Location: Frederiksberg, Copenhagen, DK

Imagine being able to design, make and host your own music festival, in your neighborhood, as a twelve year old. Some local kids, living in the Frederiksberg area, were given the opportunity to be involved in the creative design and building process for the Bernhard's Bangs Summer Street Camp festival. Using the remnants of a former playground, wooden palettes and other recycled materials, the kids-come-designers together with the Architecture and Urban Entrepreneur firm arki\_lab developed a hybrid temporary public art installation, equipped with a bar and lounge area for the festival guests to use and enjoy.

The Summer Street Camp was primarily an educational project, providing an opportunity for kids between 12-16 years old, to be designers, whilst also being educated on the benefits of waste reduction and recycling. The kids where provided with a design brief, site and deadline, in which they had to work within the project constraints - utilize recycled materials from the site and neighborhood, in rejuvenating a disused industrial site for the Bernard Bangs music festival. In the lead up to the construction week, the students participated in workshops, sketched and collaged concepts for how the event could run and how the site could operate. A tour of their neighborhood allowed them to select materials and gather further ideas for construction phase.

This project gave the kids an insight to the professional design process, from concept development to construction phase. In addition to building the temporary site many of the kids were also involved in other activities throughout the week. This included preparing lunch with 'ReGastro' a local organization that had formalized the 'dumpster diving' phenomenon, partnering up with a number of local supermarkets, collecting and using their close-to-date expired food in their cooking. The kids learnt about the benefits of waste reduction.

The Temporary Summer Street Camp is a great example on a temporary event, which links education though involvement.

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www.arkilab.dk



**CASE STUDY; EVENTS - Inflatable Community and Performance Space** 

Location: Nørrebro, Copenhagen, DK

During the month of August 2013, a large inflatable bubble popped up in the streets, urban spaces and even religious buildings around Copenhagen. They attracted curiosity, excitement and questions. More importantly they attracted people to some redundant spaces across the city. This temporary transparent bubble breathed new life into these dormant spaces, 'making the invisible, visible'.<sup>2</sup>

Plastique Fantastique, a Berlin-based creative collective, play with the potential of an urban context, unveiling a new perspective of a space for a limited time. They create aesthetically pleasing, inflatable plastic constructions, acting as sculptural interventions in the city. Established in 1999, the collective see the city as a laboratory for temporary spaces.

Exploring the performativity possibilities of urban environments through temporary architecture, the collective created 'aeropolis community center', in collaboration with Copenhagen International Theatre and the local communities.

Featured as part of the Metropolis Festival in Copenhagen, the inflatable 100m2 transparent bubble travelled across thirteen different locations, adapting its theme to each new physical setting and community. 'The scenography changes with the specific environment: there's meditation and yoga by the lake, it opens up towards the sky above us in a cemetery, it invites us to a soundless discotheque at one of the noisiest intersections in the city, it provides performance at Islands Brygge, martial arts at Superkilen and table game room in Vesterbro, it blows up inside a church and shows a future cultural center in Valby'.<sup>3</sup>

Regardless the way people view a bubble, walk around its exterior or move inside it, the pneumatic structure is a medium to experience the same physical setting in a temporary extraordinary situation. It has the ability to remove a subject from its surrounding context and

<sup>3</sup> www.plastique-fantastique.de

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> www.plastique-fantastique.de

transfer them into a new spatial realm. Their interventions change the way we perceive and interact in urban environments.

What is so successful about these 'pop-up' interventions is that it changes the way people perceive and interact with their city and surrounds. It mixes varying landscapes, creating a strange absorption between public and private spaces - creating new hybrid environment. The ephemeral structure acts as a medium to experience the same setting. The lightweight material and movement of the bubble has the ability to remove a subject from its surrounding context and transfer them into a new spatial realm. The fluidity of the structure also ensures that it's a subtle and sympathetic intervention in a public space. It occupies and mutates according to the context it is situated in.

This form of temporary use invites people, of all ages, to use the area in a new way. It offers the long-term possibilities of what a redundant space could look like.



CASE STUDY; KICK-STARTER - Prags Boulevard and PB 43

Location: Prags Boulevard 43, Copenhagen, DK

PB43 and the upgrade of Prags Boulevard is a great example of how a government led project has complemented a non-profit organization initiative, in kick starting an area of renewal.

Renewal of parts of Amager, a southern inner neighbourhood of Copenhagen has been on the Copenhagen Municipality's agenda for many years. Prags Boulevard, a key east-west artery road, connects many land uses and destinations within Amager. It runs through residential areas, industrial precincts and takes users to the oceans edge, at Oresund Sound.

The Municipality engaged a local Landscape Architect to redesign Prags Boulevard, leveraging of its connectivity to key areas within Amager, and saw its potential to bridge the gap between these areas - improving pedestrian and cycling's permeability through the area

and social meeting spaces. A new elongated urban park was created to bind the areas together. The landscape architect emphasized importance of the proposal to 'not let it become a traditional recreational areas, but a green area with high value of people of all ages.' <sup>4</sup> The space contains biking infrastructure, seating areas, 120 new trees and green areas. It also provides an opportunity for people to socialize in new ways. Seven activity areas have been arranged with the linear park and include a different experience to the user. For example the 'garden' areas is a space to sit, reflect amongst the fragrant flowers and plants, something that the elderly people wished to see for the area. Early engagement with the local residents has assisted in gaining significant support and ownership of the project.

Prags Boulevard 43 contained a large redundant paint factory for many years before "Giverum.nu" (Give space now), a local non-profit organization discovered its potential to bring new life into an area of renewal. This is how PB43 was born.

Two months after liaising with the Dutch landowners, Akzo Nobel, the organization was able to take temporary ownership and management of four buildings and the outdoor areas, free of charge until 2016. The buildings were given a minimal renovation, with the basic necessities such as lighting, heating, water and electricity installed in the buildings. The spaces within PB43 were then made available to a number of creative and emerging professionals such as artists, architects etc at a low rental rate, in supporting life for the spaces.

Since its beginnings in December 2010, the site has continuously been transformed into a creative, user-driven environment with workshops, offices, studios, galleries, café, urban laboratory and urban farm. This conversion has entailed a rethinking of the functions of the buildings and open spaces at the site. In this process a strong emphasis has been placed on the active involvement of tenants and local residents, together with an open dialogue with the municipality and the landowner. <sup>5</sup> In recent months PB43 officially registered as a cooperative with a focus on non-profit activities, formalized a new board of directors, and has taken over the legal responsibility for the lease. These new arrangements were negotiated collectively between all the tenants at PB43 and Akzo Nobel ushering in a new, more user-orientated form of organization.

The two initiatives have brought life into kick starting an area of renewal. The public realm changes to Prags Boulevard have created the physical invitation for people to use the area, whilst Givrum.nu's PB43 project provides the social invitation, giving people a reason to occupy the spaces and visit Amager.

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<sup>4</sup> www.dac.dk

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> www.pb43.dk



CASE STUDY; KICK-STARTER - Carlsberg's old brewery site 6

Location: Vesterbro, Copenhagen, DK

To many, Carlsberg is usually known for having 'probably the best beer in the world'. To those in the built environment world, it is know for its progressive approach in developing 'the Masterplan'.

Located in the western borough of Copenhagen, Vesterbro, the Carlsberg Brewery has been an active part of the Copenhagen's economy, social history and urban fabric for over 160 years. After the decision was made to close the brewery in 2006, it left a 330,000 m2 industrial site open for redevelopment.

An international design competition was called to help Carlsberg achieve its vision for the site - create a new residential and employment area in Copenhagen, in harmony with the sites rich historic fabric and surrounding residential neighborhoods. Any future masterplan for the site should draw on inspiration from Copenhagen's urban structure - dense city centers with short, winding streets, passageways and small squares.

A Danish multi-disciplinary firm, *Entasis Architects*, concept called 'Our Town' was awarded the contract. They sought to create a new sustainable and multi-functional district in Copenhagen. A point of difference with their project provided short term and long term programming for the site. They wanted to invite people to enjoy urban living and a multitude of activities in the area even before construction of the new buildings began.

There were two elements to the short-term programming - the development of temporary urban spaces and the 'quick-fix' building maintenance to allow short term, affordable rentals of the existing buildings. Both programs had the same agenda. Bring life and activity into a redundant industrial space, during the planning and construction of the new town for Carlsberg.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> www.carlsbergbyen.dk

## Affordable short term leasing

Shortly after the winning concept was announced, a selected number of buildings were restored to meet basic safety standards and ensure it was operational (i.e. ensure water and heating was running). These buildings were then subdivided and leased out on short-term (2-7 years) leases, at a much lower rent than the normal market price. This was a driver to get small businesses, artists and community groups into Carlsberg immediately and create life within the site - which worked. They also engaged an internal committee to organize and host events in the spaces.

# **Temporary Spaces**

The relocation of the beer production to Fredericia in Jutland, in 2006, meant that the Carlsberg site contained many spaces, but no people places.

The solution from the designers was to create three key temporary spaces, with different programs to bring people into the area and use the space. It is hoped that these temporary interventions can help in determining future development.

The temporary spaces will be instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition between the planning, construction and development of urban life during this period of transition. They serve as exploratory spaces for different functions, design and zone divisions. These spaces focus on physical activity, relaxation and urban life, and are expected to thrive side-by-side with the ongoing planning, construction and restructuring efforts of Carlsberg.

Tap E Plads (Tap E Square) was the first site to take on its role as a temporary urban space in Carlsberg. Located next to the Dansehallerne (Dance Hall), a well-utilized art centre, the temporary space is an outdoor square with a twist. It provides outdoor street furniture using recycled materials including railway sleepers and wooden palettes. Playground equipment provides physical activities for the children. Markings painted on the asphalt divide the square into zones, and a white gable wall can be used for film projections, football matches and other creative activities. A cafe has also leveraged off this area being the first temporary space, by setting up shop. It provides outdoor seating in the square, further contributing to the life of the area.

Boble Plads (Bubble Square), adjacent to the Boblehallen (Bubble Hall) is the 'active and physical' multi-functional temporary space. Asphalted bubbles have been created for the skaters and BMXers, street basketball and soccer can be played on the half court and others can test their balancing ability on the climbing frames. This space has direct access to J C Jacobsens Park, adding another dimension to the space.

The latest addition to the temporary spaces within Carlsberg is *Ny Tap Plads* (New Tap Square) - the creative hub of Carlsberg. It acts as a temporary art gallery/installation space. A key art installation to widely promote the area was the installation to 3,500 pieces of white rope, suspended at varying lengths from the 5.5m high roof canopy. This installation invited people of all ages to climb, swing, do as the please, with the ropes. It was successful in providing a challenging, fun-filled space that encouraged movement. For a seven-month period in 2011, *Kraftwerket*, a municipality driven workshop for young people occupied the space. This program gave young people an opportunity to engage in creative projects with artist and bureaucratic freedom.

## So what made this approach a success?

Carlsberg took a risk, which fortunately has paid off.

The temporary space programming has created a sense of place and raised its awareness amongst Copenhageners. It is a dynamic place, where things are always 'happening'. There is life at all hours of the day.

Economically it has been smart business move. Having more life and people in an area, has raised the property values, and provided a greater return-profit for the landowner, should they wish to sell off the land.

The timing of this short-term programming was also strategically economic. Carlsberg announced plans to redevelop the site in 2006, then sooner after the GFC hit, causing economic stagnation. This potential economic stalemate has set off creative urban development. The temporary space project has provided a life-boosting and economic injection into a potentially dormant site.

It has also played a greater role in truly merging the Carlsberg site into the city, breaking down barriers and letting people in. It is no longer the brewery where visitors are only allowed in via a guide tour. You can now wander and get lost in its streets, just like other part of the city. It has gone from being an introverted player to an extroverted player. It has gone from private to public, from not visible in the city grid to being part of the city.



CASE STUDY; TESTING – Upgrading the street, Nørrebrogade

Location: Nørrebro, Copenhagen, DK

Nørrebrogade is a unique street with a lively city environment. It also has enormous potential for development. The physical make-up of the street reflects the endless compromises between conflicting approaches. Even though Nørrebrogade has a number of advantages and qualities to play around with, it is not especially pleasant to move around in.

Nørrebrogade has been arranged to suit car traffic, as the street is an important access road for private cars into the inner parts of Copenhagen as well as a local-street for residents and users of Nørrebro.

Meanwhile the physical street layout, is in no way a reflection that for every 24 hours, 17,000 cars drive along Nørrebrogade, 33,000 cyclists bike along it and 30,000 bus passengers get on and off the buses, and 27,000 pedestrians between 7 - 18 who walk up and down Nørrebrogade and spend time there.

In general terms, Nørrebrogade is characterized by the numerous pedestrians and cyclists, even though these groups have had many causes for suffering: it has been difficult for them to reach their destination on the pavements and cycle tracks, there have been conflicts between cyclists and people getting on and off the buses and they have had very limited opportunities to experience attractive city life.

# The overall plan

Against this background, the politicians in the City of Copenhagen decided back in 2006 that an overall plan should be developed for Nørrebrogade. This work was carried out in the autumn of 2007 and the spring of 2008, when the municipality invited a number of local interested parties into a dialogue, after which the proposal for the overall plan was developed.

The following three goals where the main focus of the plan

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> www.kk.dk

- 1. That, Urban space will be made more attractive and city life strengthened
- 2. That, Conditions for cyclists will be improved on overcrowded stretches of cycle track
- 3. That, Public transport will be strengthened so as to create the possibility of shorter journey times and increased punctuality of buses

Nørrebrogade was to become so to speak the main nerve running through Nørrebro, where the pulse of Copenhagen can be felt and where there is place for variety, a place where Copenhageners as well as visitors live and breathe.

In total, there were four different proposals worked out for the overall plan. All of them required that car traffic be reduced to gain more space for pedestrians, cyclists and buses. In summer 2008, the politicians prioritized from among the four proposals for an overall plan. At the same time, it was decided to carry out the first stage of a traffic experiment in autumn 2008 which would throw light on the consequences to overall traffic of a 50% reduction in car traffic. It was decided that stage two of the traffic experiment would continue in 2009, when the opportunities for city life arising from a reduction in car traffic would be tried out.

## The traffic experiment

The first stage of the traffic experiment was carried out from October to December 2008. As well as reducing car traffic, the experiment also covered widening the pavement along some stretches of road as well as moving the bus stops out onto the road. This resulted in improved pedestrian flow on the pavement, where bus passengers had previously stood and waited. At the same time, the cycle tracks were doubled in width on some stretches whereas there had previously been congestion on the cycle tracks.

The municipality's assessment of stage one shows that it is possible to reduce car traffic by 50% without it having negative consequences in the surrounding residential streets. The assessment also shows that pedestrians and cyclists feel considerably safer and buses arrive more punctually, which saves bus passengers about 100,000 hours annually. In an opinion poll carried out among the inhabitants of Nørrebro, 67% stated that they wished the experiment to become permanent.

When stage one of the experiment was carried out in the autumn and winter, it was not possible to experience the full potential of the experiment's possibilities for affecting city life. Until March, the City of Copenhagen was involved in dialogues with local interested parties about the wishes and opportunities to show and brand Nørrebrogade as a modern and environmentally friendly street, including the street and pavement layout as well as the holding of various events. The results of this dialogue process took place in spring and summer 2009.

All experiences gathered from the traffic experiment was assessed and integrated into the proposal for the overall plan, which was inaugurated by the politicians in August 2009.

The upgrade of Nørrebrogade, was a great example of testing out ideas, before making the more permanent change. It allowed the planners to dare a little more, aiming higher and ensure a more successful outcome.

#### CONCLUSION

Working with temporary use in urban planning there are five things we need to remember:

- 1) It should be a long-term process, meaning that the temporary planning must stretch over a longer period of time so it is worthwhile investing personal, social and economical capital in the area. The Landowner should also dare to let some of the spontaneous and unplanned gain root, without necessarily gaining more land area and value strait away. Setting up an open end goal for the area also indicates focus on the process and the users, which typically generates a larger support and a feeling of ownership from the users.
- 2) It should be user driven innovation, meaning that the users are not just involved but are also a major part of the transformation of the space.
- 3) It should have an independent catalyst unit, meaning that it can be a good idea to establish a local unit of some sort that has the responsibility to facilitate temporary activities and catalyze new users. It is important that it can work as a credible link between the landowner and the users and ensure a common understanding in the network.
- 4) It should encourage the landowner to invest in area capital, meaning that the landowner should develop the area in the light of its existing values and possibilities, not from a bulldozer's point of view.
- 5) It should contain a common meeting place, a place that can strengthen the interaction in the network, a place where resources and competences are exchanged, creating openings for new inter-collaborations and a possibility for strengthening the common identity of the place. The common meeting place could be combined with the independent catalyst unit, or connected in relation to some everyday facilities, like lunch, printing and meeting areas. This also makes it possible to use it for coordinating events, receptions, workshops etc.

## So is the temporary here to stay?

In our post-industrial society were economies are collapsing and the environment is suffering as a result of our on-going consumer behavior the temporary can act as a bridge connecting space and people.

In times of transition the temporary can be an innovative way of bridging between design, planning and urban life, and activate space in a way that the more permanent cannot. Often urban design and planning happens too fast, but life takes time and people need time to adjust.

When testing something out in the open in 1:1 scale, we gain knowledge and at the same time give people the time to adjust to the change and even have a say in the matter. In urban design as well as planning, temporary use in general offers an opportunity to test out ideas before making a more permanent change.

In every other profession such as Car manufactories and Pharmaceutical companies, products are tested in order to learn about their shortcomings before putting them on the marked. Remember that all scientific data is based on testing. Urban design needs to be tested more out in a 1:1 scale instead of just being forced on the users.

In a way the temporary then becomes an extension of democracy because people and the everyday user of the urban space feel that they have been given the opportunity to be heard and a responsibility. This will create the feeling of ownership in many people, a feeling that makes people care more about our urban space and even promote it, as if it was their own.

## LIST OF REFERENCE

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