

# URBAN PRACTICE

FROM ACTIONS IN PUBLIC SPACE TO BUILDING COMMUNITY SPACES

studioBASAR / BUCUREȘTI / 2006-2019



**BUCUREȘTI**



Frame from the DVD Sahia Vintage IV "Comandă Politică", "Festivalul filmului pentru sate" (1960), alb-negru, 10 min.



[www.a1.ro](http://www.a1.ro)

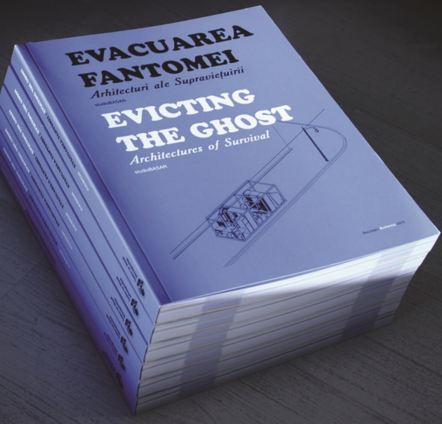








**DESIGN**



In Between

SOS THE FOUNTAIN

In the summer of 2012, Bucharest's City Hall wanted to refurbish the sidewalks and street furniture along the NE boulevard, intending to demolish the famous Danubius Fountain from the NEF center of the square and replace it with a "living fountain" at the street level. The project's legality was contested by an ad-hoc group called SOS. The Fountain had started a series of civic actions, protests and letters towards the authorities, bringing the attention of the media. They also organized the guarding of the fountain during the night and events during the day, like cleaning, human chains and exhibitions. After a public debate held on 20th July, the City Hall announced the cancellation of the demolition and the Fountain was saved.



Site plan of the Danubius Fountain area, showing the fountain's location and surrounding urban layout.

AGORA

Proposed by a civic association, in March 2012 a group of citizens launched the idea of a public square in the area of the Danubius Fountain. The idea was to create a public square in the area of the Danubius Fountain, which would be a place for people to meet and interact. The project was supported by the City Hall, which proposed a competition to design the square. The winning design was a public square with a fountain and a series of public buildings. The project was implemented in 2013 and is now a popular public space in Bucharest.

CASE STUDIES



Agora public square, Bucharest, 2013. Photo: Andrei Ciogaru

SPEAKER'S CORNERS

Following an initiative from Flavian (that is, Siburg Romanu), an architectural proposal for a public square in the area of the Danubius Fountain. The project was supported by the City Hall, which proposed a competition to design the square. The winning design was a public square with a fountain and a series of public buildings. The project was implemented in 2013 and is now a popular public space in Bucharest.



Speaker's Corners at the Fountain, 2012. Photo: Andrei Ciogaru



CNDP Occupied installation, Bucharest, 2011. Photo: Andrei Ciogaru

CROSSING

In this middle way between programming and neglect, between staging and formalizing of protest by designing the space for it or leaving it open as a public function, relying on the assumption that protests will always find a place? By attending the University Square as an open-air center of continuous place-making without looking for a clear answer, we embraced five tactics for generating public use. Different from the initial intentions of their supporting structures, some of the elements mentioned here – the Carpioliana station, the Balkon, the Fountain – were not originally intended to help, support or maintain the state of protest. We intend to connect with the transformative possibilities of the place by a re-urbanized approach, a pedestrian crossing that will link the two sides of the main NE boulevard, connecting the island in the middle, currently both no man's land and memorial site. The call for a crossing has different meanings: on a small scale, laid as plain traffic; tool remains people's natural flows in the area, which were used in the underground passage and it opens up the memorial site in the middle, practically invisible and inaccessible now, on a larger scale, it stands as an alternative to the dominant, almost oppressive urban tendencies in Bucharest's planning strategy to out-bridge, die and impose faster thoroughfares for cars and their driver's needs. The crossing can have multiple readings, as a performing instrument of the Boulevard's concept, affecting the urban fabric act of all the protesters that currently face and practically prevent permanently linking the two recently divided squares. Engaging with opportunities and risks, the crossing could partially address the problem of the violent conquest of the roadway of the boulevard, but at the same time transform its use in times of protest, as a legal crossing which links both sides of the square and opens access to the memorial site in the middle, acting there as a starting point.

PROPOSAL



University Square, Bucharest, 2011. Photo: Andrei Ciogaru

Habitat de Bucuresti

Two main issues have been identified: the need to create a new habitat in Bucharest, and the need to create a new habitat in Bucharest. The project is a response to these issues, and aims to create a new habitat in Bucharest. The project is a response to these issues, and aims to create a new habitat in Bucharest.

THE MEANS TO THE END

The means to the end is a series of modular wooden structures that could be used both as multiple speaker's corners or just as everyday street furniture that could be assembled together for a series of uses, such as benches, tables or pavilion. The proposal was submitted to the City Hall's public consultation which didn't pass the authorization, using the following reasons: ... due to the events started in January 2012 and also due to the nature of activity proposed, there is a high risk to already public order. Also, the realistic construction proposal as support for the photography can be used by the protesters against the security forces. ... The construction proposed for the nearby locations, which the organizers released, the exhibition was therefore canceled.

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RESEARCH





# ACTIONS



# PUBLIC EQUIPMENT



# MOBILITY



A large, rectangular public bath is constructed from blue plastic sheeting and wooden pallets. The bath is filled with water and is surrounded by a wooden pallet deck. Several children are playing in the water, while many adults are sitting on the pallets around the bath, watching the children. The bath is located in an outdoor urban setting, likely a festival or public square, with many people walking around in the background. The scene is captured during the day, with natural light illuminating the scene.

# Public Bath

Bucharest, *Street Delivery* urban festival, 2012



Dâmbovița apă dulce, Amedeo Preziosi, 1868



<https://www.facebook.com/thermebucuresti/>





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LA VIE EST  
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High  
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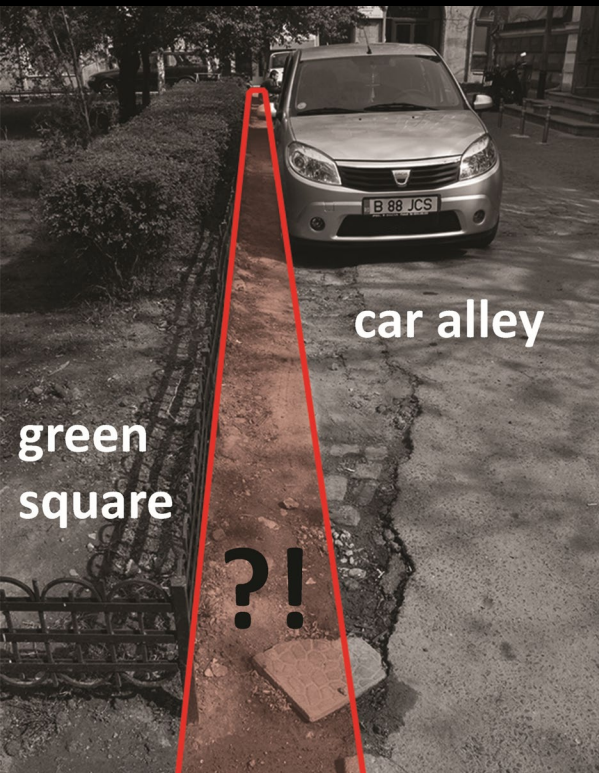




# The Letter Bench

Bucharest, *Street Delivery* urban festival, 2009-2018









# Tei Community Center

Bucharest, 2016-ongoing





facebook.com/InitiativaDinPrelungireaGhencea



facebook.com/grupulfloreasca - Foto: Cornel Brad



facebook.com/initiativafavorit



facebook.com/SalvatiParculTineretului





Protest for the lake, July 2013



Protest for the park, May 2011



Community event, May 2015



Work meeting - in a school



Work meeting - in an apartment building



Public cafe, 2015



Public cafe, 2014





CENTRUL  
COMUNITAR TEI

INAUGURARE  
SAMBATA  
15 OCT. 2016  
11.00-15.00  
PINESTILE TEIULUI  
EXPO FOTO  
ATELIERE COPIL  
HARTA COMUNITARII  
FOMIA DE TEI



ADULTS WORKSHOPS



STUDENTS WORKSHOPS



# EDUCATION



ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

AUTHORITIES MEETINGS

# CIVIC

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPER



THEATER

PUBLIC LECTURES



CHILDRENS WORKSHOPS

INTERCULTURAL EVENINGS

# CULTURE



COMMUNITY MEETINGS



NIGHTS



CONCERTS

EXHIBITIONS

# CENTRUL COMUNITAR TEI



INAUGURARE  
SĂMBĂȚĂ  
15 OCT. 2016  
11<sup>00</sup> - 15<sup>00</sup>  
POVESTILE TEIULUI  
• EXPO. FOTO  
• ATELIERE COPII  
• HARTA CARTIERULUI  
• FOAIA DE TEI



# Conclusions

New mode of practicing architecture (especially in our context):

- starting from a need identified by a group or a community (as opposed to needs invented by the market or by the administration).
- involving the future users through the whole process: co-design and co-production.
- empowering citizens through sharing of knowledge and power.
- working *with* communities instead of working *for* communities.

Place making tactics can be a way to initiate community building.

Scaling only horizontally through multiplication of small scale, iterative, experimental, bottom-up projects is not enough. In order to have a bigger impact on urban systems, a vertical scaling is needed (e.g. involvement of authorities).

Spatial practices, in order to still be relevant within the urban systems and the society, have to help build an architecture around social movements.