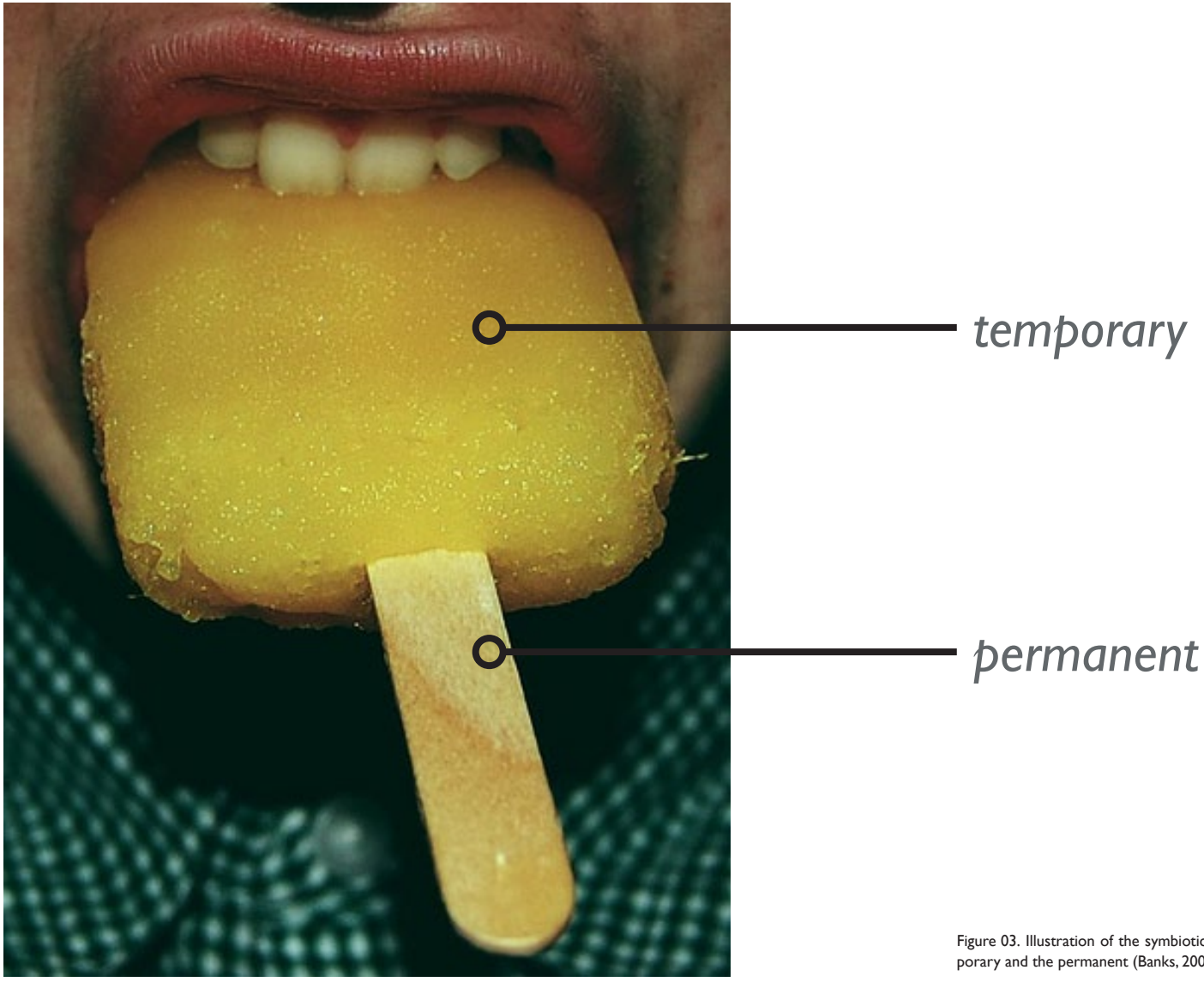



Figure 03. Illustration of the symbiotic relationship between the temporary and the permanent (Banks, 2008).

# 02. THEORETICAL APPROACH

# 2.1 TENSION: PERMANENT VERSUS TEMPORARY

"All art is perishable" (Harbison, 1991, 13)

Within the discipline of architecture there exists paradox, duality and tension. The area of investigation lies between permanence and temporality. This tension cannot be easily resolved, if ever. It's doubtful that there exists an ultimate, or extreme form of temporality or permanence. There is, however a spectrum that exists in-between and is evident in architecture.

The relationship between temporary and permanent structures is a relationship of complementary influence. The tipping of the scale between the two depends largely on ones perception, interpretation and experience.

Agreeing that this tension is relative and intuitive, there are certain practices and forms of architecture that are generally considered to be of a more permanent or temporary nature and this will be the focal point of the study (Figure 03).

*Fernández-Galiano observes: "Architecture involves an uncertain mix of solid reality and pale shadow." (Touw, 2006, 7)*

*"Entities existing in the physical world and those that live only in the minds of human beings both have durability. But the two obey quite different rules, and the destiny of objects made of resistant matter varies from that of their counterparts in memory." Rudolf Arnheim (Touw, 2006, 7).*

## 2.1.1 Permanent

A) adjective [adaptation of Latin *permanent-em*, present participle of *permanere;* to stay to the end, that B) remains fixed, motionless (Touw, 2006, 24).

'Permanent' is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as "continuing or designed to continue indefinitely without change" (Touw, 2006, 23).

## 2.1.2 Permanence & Perception

By definition, architecture is meant to be permanent, to serve a practical and aesthetic purpose over an indefinite period of time (Chabrowe, 1974, 38). Formally, the concept is introduced into architectural discourse in Vitruvius' *Ten Books of Architecture* as 'firmitas' and refers to the "ability of a building to endure, based on its own material strength and soundness of construction; often defying both nature's and time's deteriorating effects" (Touw, 2006, 28).

Embedded in the word 'permanence', is an understanding of both "time" and "matter". This understanding is dependent on, and affected by cultural and scientific insights."And it is, therefore, inevitable that changes in our definitions of "time" and "matter" will also compel us to rethink the concept of permanence" Shadi Nazarian (Touw, 2006, 7)

In contemporary society, permanence is generally perceived as an absolute concept. This causes confusion because we "permanence" to describe things we perceive from a relative perspective. Keeping this in mind and seeing permanence as both absolute and the relative, avoids conflict (Touw, 2006, 8).

"If left to itself or discarded from the human world, the chair will again become wood, and the wood will decay and return to the soil from which the tree sprang" (Touw, 2006, 10). In this sense, then, permanence might be thought of, or measured, as the interval between successive cycles – the longer the interval, the more permanent or durable is the object.

## 2.1.3 Defining temporary architecture

Temporary construction is something that is already present, and plays an important role in the socio-cultural and economical context of Pretoria; beginning from the time when farmers set up camp in Pretoria to buy supplies and have communion until today when street vendors commute to the city to put up their various stalls to sell cigarettes, sweets and fruit. Temporary construction also plays an important role in architecture and design, for example: the form, work and scaffolding used during construction and maintenance of permanent buildings as well as the temporary structures used for events and exhibitions.

## 2.1.4 Types of temporary uses and structures already present in the Pretoria CBD

- Fairs and festivals
- Sporting events
- Art installations
- Exhibitions
- Live performances
- Performance stages and sets
- Film sets
- Shop fittings
- Food vendors
- Events (demonstrations, promotions & marketing)
- Micro-enterprise developments
- Markets
- Mobile public outreach centres

The SANS 0400-1990 (18) defines a 'temporary building' as any building that is so declared by the owner and that is being used or is to be used for a specified purpose for a specified limited period of time, but does not include a builders shed.

"Temporary architecture can range from a one-time educational event to a month-long art installation to mobile architecture that is designed to be portable but may stay on one site for several years." (Dann et al. 2009, 3)

"Temporary architecture, to me, is simply the space created and removed over a short period of time, like for an event." (Baunach, 2009)

## 2.1.5 Temporary design through history

Temporary architecture serves a different purpose from permanent architecture and has been flourishing for over 100 years. Throughout history its essential function has been to stand as an advertisement, conveying a political, social or commercial message. Once the occasion for the message had passed, so did the architectural messenger. The history of temporary architecture goes back to antiquity (Chabrowe, 1974, 385).

**Hellenic times**
The first main visual records of temporary structures were coins
**Middle Ages**
Scarcely any records
**Early Renaissance**
As coherent history emerged, temporary structures became a distinct genre
**Baroque**
This genre reached a peak
**Early Renaissance & Baroque**
- Public celebrations and mourning
- Decorative edifices, wooden scaffold faced by stucco and canvas
- Incorporated into elaborate ceremonial events
- Commemorated in pamphlets that contained engravings and descriptions of the structures along with accounts of the events and their participants

**Mid-nineteenth century**
Declined to the point of dying out but gave way to an industrial equivalent (Chabrowe, 1974, 386)

The **Industrial Revolution** accompanied by urbanization and the mechanization of labour, freed individuals from toil and resulted in the need for new and different forms of architecture and experiences.

**Today** the industrial era is giving way to a technologically inspired and knowledge-based society in which definitions of concepts like 'temporality' and 'permanence' are again being redefined (Edginton & Chen, 2008, 1-6). Architects are again fascinated by the idea of temporality, to a degree not seen since the nineteen- sixties and -seventies, when experimental design teams explored what Peter Cook, a member of London's Archigram, called "expendability" and "throw-away architecture" (Hawthorne, 2008)

## 2.1.6 Intention

A clue towards defining temporary and permanent architecture can be found in the intention. Compare a structure, built with the knowledge that it will be erased soon after planning and expecting its demise; to a structure built with the intention that it should last indefinitely. Sometimes, when structures outlast their expectations, continue to be used or become socially or culturally important. That which was intended to be temporary, cross over to permanence. Examples are; the Eiffel Tower built in 1889 which was intended only as a temporary demonstration piece as the entrance arch to The World Fair and the outdoor Delacorte Theatre in Central Park, New York which was originally built as a temporary structure in 1962 (Groak, 1992, 70).

# 2.2 FORMS OF TEMPORALITY

## Temporary & Changeable Use

These are: permanent structures of which the use or program change over time. Certain permanent structures are not used continually or the use changes. In the realm of architecture a permanent structure does not guarantee that it will be permanently occupied.

Examples are: theatres, holiday homes, expo-, event- and exhibition centres, as well as vacant or abandoned spaces.

Figure 04. Human scale stand (Design Week, 2009).

Figure 05. Abandoned industrial space (Summers, 2009).

## Temporary & Different Location

These are: nomadic or mobile structures that can be dismantled relocated and re-assembled; movable, foldable and collapsible architecture or furniture.

Examples are: tents, caravans, travelling carnivals and shows, installations, exhibitions, form work, scaffolding and camping chairs.

Figure 06. Softwall (Molo Design, 2010).


Figure 07. We Can Xalant/ Mobile constructions (Muns, 2009).

## Temporary & Once-off Existence

These are: once-off disposable structures that will be thrown away or cease to exist. Structures that are constructed with the intention of being de-constructed never to be assembled again.

Examples are: once-off events, pavilions, promotions, launches, exhibitions, insertions, sets, decor and installations.

Figure 08. Burning Man Festival (Fairs, 2007).

Figure 09. Open Burble (Fuller & Haque, 2009).

## Temporary Materiality

These are: structures with a transient material quality: structures composed of materials that can easily break or degrade; disposable & recyclable materials; non-durable, light, translucent or thin materials; materials culturally associated with temporality.

Examples are: paper, cardboard, reeds, thatch, fabrics, canvas,tensile structures, glass, ice, wood, water, light and corrugated cardboard.

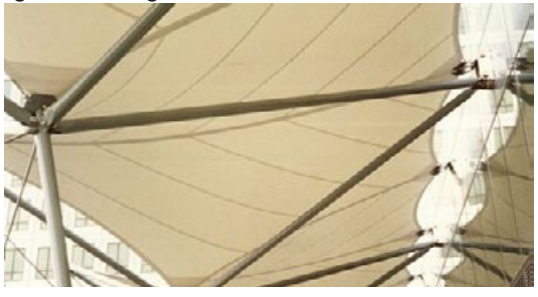


Figure 10. Canary Wharf Terrace Canopy (Architen Landrell, 2010).

Figure 11. Back Side Flip 360° (Fairs, 2008).

## Events

These are: structures that last as long as the experience they facilitate and space that is temporarily appropriated to accommodate an event or happening.
In this case the focus is on the experience that only lasts temporarily but creates a lasting memory.

Examples are: promotions, festivals, performances digital media such as film projections and virtual space.

Figure 12. The Port Eliot Lit Fest (Bradshaw & Campbell, 2010)

Figure 13. Krzysztof Wodiczko projection in Tijuana, Mexico (Flicker, 2004).

## Temporary phase or position

These are: Structures that grow, age, change form, composition, state or position. Structures that are intended to decay, change or evolve over time

Examples are: adjustable architecture, flexible space, open building systems, ice structures, plants, corroding metals.

Figure 14. Vertical Garden (Ping mag, 2006).

Figure 15. Video Ice Hotel (Bulletin Solutions, 2010).

# 2.3 EXAMPLES OF TEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

## Urban Switch

This was a two-storey, 12 m high, temporary information pavilion by Modulorbeat, for the sculpture projects Münster 2007 exhibition. It had a gold-coloured exterior shell of perforated copper sheets in response to the Silberne Frequenz (i.e. Silvery Frequency), a light installation by Otto Piene, on the facade of the adjacent building. Illuminated from the inside at night, the interplay with the Silberne Frequenz installation created a particularly unique atmosphere. Acting as an "urban switch", a moving part of the pavilion was able to reroute pedestrian and bicycle traffic on the square, thus also transforming the use and perception of this public space ( Schwiontek, 2008).

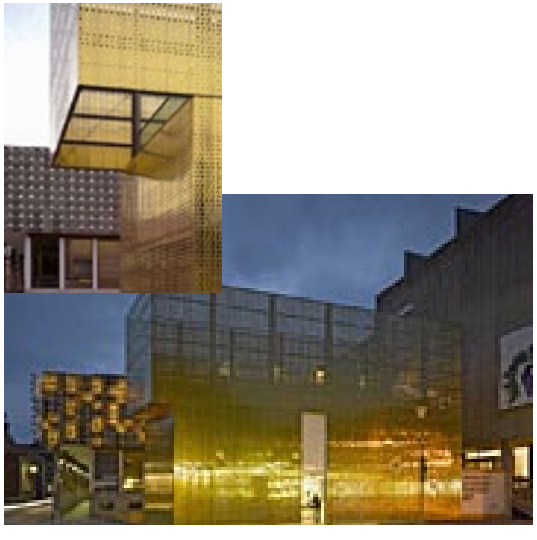


Figure 16. Exterior view of Urban ( Schwiontek, 2008).

## Kubik,

Temporary buildings are often minimalistic; stripped to their bare essentials (Modulorbeat, 2006). For three months, an empty plot of land in Berlin was transformed by constructing a temporary night club out of 144 plastic water tanks, normally used in industry. They were joined together by a simple system of metal bars and Euro Pallets, a 150 watt bulb was placed in each canister and wrapped in heat-resistant coloured film. Kubik has since been on tour in other cities like Barcelona and Lisbon ( Schwiontek, 2008).

Figure 17. Exterior view of Kubik (Schwiontek, 2008).

## Kunsthülle LPL

This provided a temporary venue for the Liverpool Biennial 2006 by OSA architects. The quality of temporary architecture is also determined by the aesthetic impact of the realized concepts. On the flat roof of a disused factory, a simple steel construction was covered with PVC strips that stretched down to the ground. On the roof itself, a second inner shell, made of red PVC strips formed the actual venue. The PVC curtain of this two-layer facade allowed light and visitors to pass through ( Schwiontek, 2008).

Figure 18. Exterior view of Kunsthülle LPL (Schwiontek, 2008)

# 2.4 DELIGHT

## 2.4.1 The importance of recreational spaces and activities in an urban environment

As previously discussed, for several centuries, temporary construction has been, and still is associated with festivals and other forms of public, urban recreational and cultural activities.

Recreation is an expression of individual interest, often reflecting broader social and cultural values, and can serve as a wellspring for the generation of new creative perspectives for cities. As such, recreation is an optimal medium for transformation (Edginton & Chen, 2008, 1-6)

In the development of modern society, we can observe a few changes. One of these changes is the increase of mobility of mankind, the increase of speed in general and the progress in telecommunications. We can observe an increase of free-lance specialists, who work as teams and project-oriented for a specific and relatively short time, often on different locations; "The Nomads of the 21st Century". Isolation, a decreasing social life and alienation, is already manifesting itself for the pioneers (Horsmans, 1996).

"Rapid changes in society have resulted in a very dynamic, fluid environment that demands from individuals and societies the ability to engage in the process of transformation", says Edginton & Chen (2008, 1-6). To transform or change, one must be free or unencumbered from the constraints that are imposed in seeking a new way of being. Leisure provides an optimal opportunity for such transformation or change. Changes in society also create needs for new and different forms of leisure amenities and experiences. Recreation has the potential for improving, nourishing and sustaining individuals as well as cities because it:

- Enhances the livability of communities which has become a central theme in the promotion of cities in order to attract businesses. A livability approach focuses on creating leisure-oriented social and physical environments
- Provides an optimal environment for individuals to seek new experiences, to experiment and to learn and grow anew.
- Creates opportunities for professionals to gain new knowledge, skills, attitudes and values
- When applied to the workplace, environments can be designed in such a way as to promote a more creative, playful, and open social and physical environment

(Edginton & Chen, 2008, 1-6).

In the chapter 'The Carnivalization of the World' Parker (2003, 140) discusses the Rio Carnival in Brazil and points out that the carnival has changed and grown over time in response to the specific circumstances of Brazilian life. "The carnival itself has been "Brazilianized" and has itself become a kind of metaphor with its own highly complicated set of meanings" (Parker, 2003, 140).

Hawthorne (2008) uses the example of Los Angeles as a city that has a long history of what he calls vernacular temporality; rows of taco trucks and party tents during Oscar week and thousands of people drive into the desert to take in the pop-up urbanism of the annual Coachella and Burning Man festivals.

*"This linear trajectory of ones life is interrupted each year by the cyclical rhythm of the seasons, by the time outside time, when the world of established order and daily life dissolves , giving way to a world of play , in which all hierarchical structures are overturned and the fundamental equality of all human beings is proclaimed."*
*(Parker, 2003, 141)*

*"(As such) public festivities were intimately linked to improvisation: the magic created in the imperfect was what carried the essence of the event, for in the unfinished, one can imagine new realities; they allowed to test and develop construction hypothesis and new forms). "*
*(Lévesque, 2007)*

# 2.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF TEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

*"…temporary structures are valuable not despite but because of their fleeting, popular character." (Chabrowe, 1974, p.391)*

*" We are in need of a new approach where variability in space, time and shape, flexibility and portability are the main characteristics. Where conventional urbanism is based on two dimensional planning of functions and building architecture, that lasts forever, we now need an urbanism that introduces time as a parameter." (Horsmans, 1996)*

## 2.5.1 Economical climate

Currently the economic impacts of large-scale developments are being questioned. Lévesque (2007) is of opinion that small-scale temporary architecture has the liberty to explore and test larger themes through direct engagement with their site and their audience "Indeterminability emerges in the meeting of experience, time and context; the outcome of this conflation is impossible to predict" Lévesque (2007). Temporary architecture is an intervention which unveils unpredictable, experimental and educational opportunities. She also explains that impermanence superimposes an alternative reality by changing the time of experience (Lévesque 2007). As Perez-Gomez noted "festival time was obviously different from normal time. It dislocated and relocated human temporality, without resorting to banal linear time or a simple return of the same" (Lévesque, 2007). Once again, according to Lévesque (2007) 'As such, public festivities were intimately linked to improvisation: the magic created in the imperfect was what carried the essence of the event, for in the unfinished, one can imagine new realities; they allowed to test and develop construction hypothesis and new forms'.

## 2.5.2 Reusing and recycling

We live in times where dwindling resources, pressing environmental problems and sustainability play an important role in the future of architecture. "Though it may sound paradoxical at first, this is precisely where we see great potential for temporary buildings and installations", says Oliver Langbein from OSA (Office for Subversive Architecture) a network of eight architects and town planners who studied together in Darmstadt and now work in eight cities in five European countries. Langbein explains that "Experience shows that plans for the future are often very unreliable and that some buildings become obsolete much more quickly than originally expected". The key to sustainable planning, he believes, is to develop a solution which is appropriate to the particular space: "It may prove more sustainable to first use a temporary installation to identify a location's potential rather than designing a particularly eco-friendly building." (Cave, 2008)

## 2.5.3 Collaboration

An integral part of temporary construction is, in many cases, a dialogue with local players. Oliver Langbein explains: "By incorporating their background knowledge into the work process, alternative concepts can emerge and planning errors can be avoided." (Cave, 2008)
The boundaries between architecture, art, design and social intervention become blurred. "The open links to other disciplines are simply more diverse with temporary concepts than is the case in classical building projects", says Oliver Langbein, while Jan Kampshoff from Modulorbeat stresses: "All these categories are relevant to us, and it makes little difference whether

our work is then dubbed art, architecture, design or whatever." (Cave, 2008)

## 2.5.4 The temporary as catalyst ground for experiment, facilitating change in the permanent

The temporary intervention could make suggestions towards ways in which the building could be permanently altered or re-used.

"Temporary projects are a bit like an **urban laboratory"**, says Jan Kampshoff from Modulorbeat (a firm of urbanists and planners in Münster):"What is fascinating about this type of work is that we can use the projects to transform, improve, disrupt, ignore or reinterpret spaces for a short period of time. The projects may disappear, but the spaces are never the same again." Temporary buildings also have the advantage that they can often be erected **more quickly** than conventional buildings based on light and inexpensive materials and inventive and logical assembly". (Cave, 2008).
An interdisciplinary workshop was ran by Oliver Langbein and Britta Eiermann during the Darmstadt Summer of Architecture 2008. Inspired by the question "Who does public space belong to ?", the workshop examined the scope for young people to make active use of urban spaces. Together with university and school students, the architects devised temporary transformations. They transformed lonely park benches into lounges and played urban mini golf in empty water basins and through old drainpipes and gutters (Figure 19). For their Landgewinnung (i.e. land reclamation) event they used large yellow towels to occupy public spaces and bus stops like only the Germans can (Figure 20). One thing that does become clear is that the experimental character of temporary works allows provocative architectural statements and a new perception of squares, public spaces and parks.

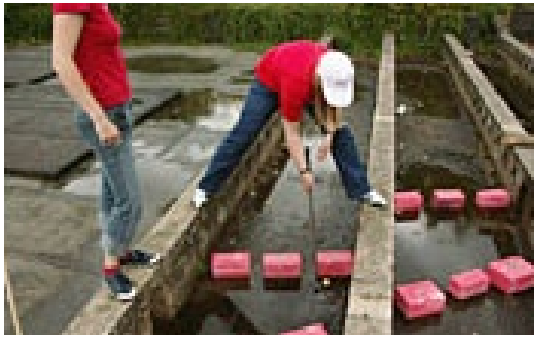


Figure 19. Urban mini-golf temporary transformation (Cave, 2008).

Figure 20. Reclaiming land with yellow beach towels (Cave, 2008 ).

# 2.6 THE TEMPORARY USE OF VACANT SPACE

In the CBD of Pretoria, vacant spaces are seen as dangerous and to be avoided. These spaces are then illegally occupied. Eviction usually causes great distress to the owners , occupants and the surrounding community. Property also gets damaged when lying vacant for too long. Vacant spaces also have an adverse effect on the property value in an area (Figure 21). For these reasons the temporary use of vacant space is worth exploring.

During 2009 the Central Eastside Industrial Council of Portland Oregon in collaboration with Portland State University did research on this subject and identified benefits that temporary projects offer to property owners, space users and the community.

## 2.6.1 For property owners temporary projects can:

- Maintain the commercial viability for a property or area
- Demonstrate a viable, active use of a space to potential permanent tenants and attract people to the site, increasing exposure and interest
- Improve the space if users do painting or other finishing work—increasing its value
- Generate revenue.
- Prove the viability for permanent use
- Put the property "on the map"and boost the image of the property and the owner
- Help maintain and develop good relationships with neighbouring owners and the community
- Enable owners to be involved in uplifting their community by fostering creative activity and start-up businesses

## 2.6.2 For property users temporary projects can:

- Test out a neighbourhood before making permanent commitments
- Offer a low-budget way to demonstrate property viability
- Allow existing businesses and community groups to expand their workshops, stores, or office space for special events, seasonal activities, or short-term projects
- House temporary events in unconventional locations
- Give artists and businesses exposure to new customers and spaces
- Provide venues for displays of art in storefronts (Figure 22)
- Provide locations for entrepreneurs to try out ideas and experiment with a low budget

## 2.6.3 For communities temporary projects can:

- Keep a business district active and attractive
- Prevent property from becoming an eyesore and reveal new possibilities for vacant spaces
- Activate and enliven dead or awkward spaces, such as publicly-owned pieces of land near highways and rail lines, walls and rooftops,or unused portions of occupied buildings
- Demonstrating possible uses for a space that is currently empty
- Spark more ideas and build a vision of could be

*"Sometimes the spaces act as laboratories for the future city.*
*Sometimes the uses act as catalysts for (re)development.*
*Sometimes they make money.*
*Sometimes they are just fun."*
*(Dann et al. 2009, 2)*


Figure 21. Rundown storefront that once was a CoraMart (Heavilin, 2009).


Figure 22. Temporary art space (Bradshaw et al. 2010).

# 2.7 ARCHITECTURE AS EVENT & EXPERIENCE

## Spatial, social and cultural experience

## Event = people + activity + space = **architecture**

According to Tschumi (1977) the difference between architecture and art lies in "the experience of the moving body in space." He sees the exclusion of the body and its experience from discourse as resulting in a reductive and formalist interpretation of architecture. According to him architecture should be seen as "…an interaction of space and events" instead of an object, as a "human activity or open-ended text" (Tschumi, 1981). Tschumi's writing focuses on themes of transgression, limits and excess. He also places emphasis on the event and the experience of pleasure as being orchestrated by architectural space (Nesbitt, 1996).

He concentrates on the senses and the exhilarating differences and dialectics in the experience of space. He sees architecture as a pleasure of the mind rather than a thing of the mind. Architecture depends on imagination, sensual experience as well as rational concepts. In his explanation of fragments he refers to 'desire' as the movement between opposing fragments; the real and the virtual, memory and fantasy, presence and absence.

"Architecture is architecture because it sets in motion the operations of seduction and the unconscious." (Nesbitt, 1996, pp.530-540).

Events are temporary by nature. In order to accommodate events, space is often created and removed over a short period of time. During an event a space can make you feel special in the moment when, normally, you would not consider that space as being special (Baunach, 2009).

## 2.7.1 Palio dinner

An example of this is a Palio dinner. The Palio is an annual horse race in Siena that pits neighbourhoods against each other. Before the race, a big dinner is held in each street and neighbours come out to eat. At the head of the table is the horse, the guest of honour.
This event transforms a city street into a dining room for thousands. Although Siena has a natural and man-made beauty, Baunach (2009) would argue that the temporal experience of the dinner is the basis for falling in love with the city of Siena. The event is fleeting but it is this intense memory of civic transformation that truly creates the lasting impression of the city rather than its day to day stasis (Figure 23).

Temporary architecture also helps resolve what is really important for inhabitation, says Baunach (2009). The importance of space lies in the architectural experience augmented by its static form and aesthetics which is based more on a memory of a space at that moment.

Figure 23. Palio dinner in Siena (Baunach, 2009)

## 2.7.2 Theatre & Temporality

Temporary structures have customarily been associated with the theatre. But while they shared the transient nature of the stage sets, they were always three-dimensional. A temporary structure constituted a volume of mass and usually enclosed space. The stage set was primarily two-dimensional and only simulated mass (Chabrowe, 1974, p.386).

In commenting on his set design for Richard Wagner's 'Tristan and Isolde', Daniel Libeskind says that: "the difference between architecture and theatre is that in theater everything is built to disappear…made with paper glue and light materials."

He continues to explain how powerful the impermanent can be, because it creates memory and emotions which remain in the hearts and minds of the audience and that this is what architecture and theatre have in common (Libeskind, 2009). Places where collective and public cultural activity occur have an important and lasting influence (aesthetic, social, economical and symbolic) on the form and function of cities (Groak, 1992).

## 2.7.3 Environmental Theatre

"In 1916, poet Guillaume Apollinaire imagined a theatrical performance like a festival or market day in a public plaza. Apollinaire's vision of a multifaceted performance on a stage surrounding the audience was developed by modern directors in the 1920s and 30s as "environmental theatre." Apollinaire argued that art, theatre and architecture should neither mirror nature, nor construct an ideal, but draw back the veil of the ordinary by juxtaposing images that open viewers' imaginations" (Read, 2006, 8).

Walter Gropius and El Lissitzky were respectively approached to design environmental theatres that would engulf the audience spatially, erasing theatric distance. Bringing audience and actors into the same space challenged the boundary between fiction, reality and constructed plays, not as fantasy, but as meaningful stories that have a real effect in the world (Read, 2006, 8).

During the same time Erwin Piscator in Germany and Vsevelod Meyerhold in Russia led a movement to do away with the box stage, to cross the proscenium arch and to bring performances into the hall with the audience (Read, 2006, 8).

## 2.7.4 Theatre as Experiment

"Theatre is perhaps architecture's most powerful ally in exploring the social impact of design: how space shapes actions and relationships. Theatre offers a manipulable realm of make-believe that can reflect on real situations, characters and places. In this protected field of play an architect and director may set up situations that actors explore emotionally in movement and gesture. In this sense, theatre demonstrates architecture, playing on exactly the issues of interpersonal relationships in space that architects engage with most pointedly in designing buildings, public space and urban life." (Read, 2006, 2).

"Through theatre, a designer may explore physical and social space in real time, at a real scale and with real people." (Read, 2006, 2).

Performances were to absorb spectators in a complete experience of action in space. Autant and Lara saw architecture neither as an art of composition nor as engineering, but as a performing art. In the experimental realm of theatre, actors and spectators could test the space poetically in performance (Read, 2006, 3).

# 2.8 CASE STUDY _THE DESIGN OF THE THÉÂTRE DE L'ESPACE

In 1937, Autant built the Théâtre de l'Espace (Theatre of Space) performance hall within a larger structure designed by Paul Tournon for the Paris International Exposition, which stood for one year (Figure 24) (Read, 2006, 3).
The theatre comprised a 50m long rectangular hall. The audience was accommodated in a smaller rectangular pit at the centre, surrounded on three sides by a fixed, raised stage. Small stage spaces were also placed in between the audience. This created two levels of performance space; one close-up and one seen from further away. On the upper surrounding stage, three scenes appeared: one beyond the facing audience, a second scene to the side requiring spectators to turn and a third going on behind them. (Read, 2006, 6).
The exterior walls of the hall were pierced with glazed doors and windows that reached from the floor of the stage to a high ceiling to create a 'transparent atmospheric band, continuous with the outside' (Read, 2006, 5). Panels of scenery were hung in front of the windows yet they never entirely obscured a view to the outside. Actors on the panoramic stage would perform with scenery above them as well as a view through the windows to trees and sky beyond. This juxtaposition read simultaneously as flat paint and as illusory space (Read, 2006, 8). Most of the roof was a skylight that could be opened completely in good weather, releasing the hall to the sky (Figure 26) (Read, 2006, 4).

The slope of the stage floor on the upper levels created traditional up-stage and down-stage positions but because it followed the line of sight the audience could not see the floor and, as a result, it would be difficult to read depth (Figure 27). Together with the bright light from the windows behind, actors would seem two-dimensional and as if they were floating in weightless silhouette, their faces invisible (Read, 2006, 7).

The skylight lit the actors from above and made them appear close up when surrounded by the audience. This proximity and consistent shadow emphasized their physical presence and allowed the audience to see their movements in three-dimensional detail. The seating configuration placed both actors and members of the audience opposite each other with pieces of performance in-between. This meant that they were integrated into the performance and could see each others' reactions (Read, 2006, 6).

Théâtre de l'Espace played on the boundary between the theatre and the city, constructing a fictional scene within a real place. While the narrative of the script invoked a fictional elsewhere, a view of the Parisian landscape was maintained juxtaposed with scenery. This recalled ancient epic dramas staged outside in natural landscapes or city squares.

Autant included a large screen on the building façade so that performances which were in progress inside, could be projected into the city (Read, 2006, 10). "… rubbing the story against reality, placing spectators both there and here, inviting them to speculate in between" (Read, 2006, 7)

The architecture of the Théâtre de l'Espace might be read as a demonstration – a testing ground – for modernity that stands opposed to both traditional theatres and urban spaces (Read, 2006, 9).

Autant applied visual techniques used in modern cinema to the design of the theatre. The surrounding stage functioned like a panorama that the audience could scan like a camera, filming a landscape. Similarly the audience could follow a character moving between scenes like a cinematic tracking shot (Read, 2006, 10).

The Théâtre de l'Espace identified two experiences familiar in the structure of public, urban life and performances that are representative of public life (Read, 2006, 13). Distant scenes on the upper level surrounding the audience evoked one's view of the lives of others, which often appear scenographic and well-ordered (Read, 2006, 9). The scenes on the lower stages unfolded unpredictably and like spontaneous events in one's own life and modelled the casual, more private interactions of the city (Read, 2006, 11). The two areas remained linked and could affect each other. The boundaries between were "permeable enough for drama in motion" to cross from one to the other, defining moments of particular intensity when characters step from one into the other (Figure 28) (Read, 2006, 10).

Through theatre, Autant and Lara investigated architecture not as form but as action, a practice particularly relevant to design in cities (Read, 2006, 1).

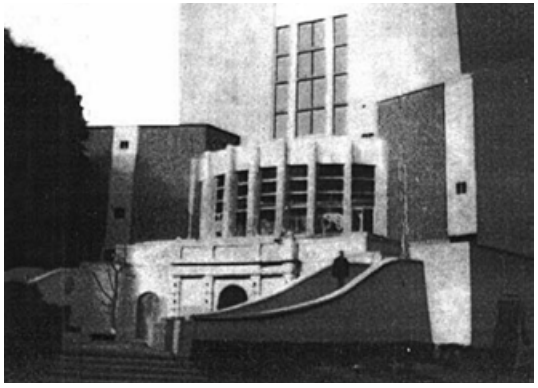
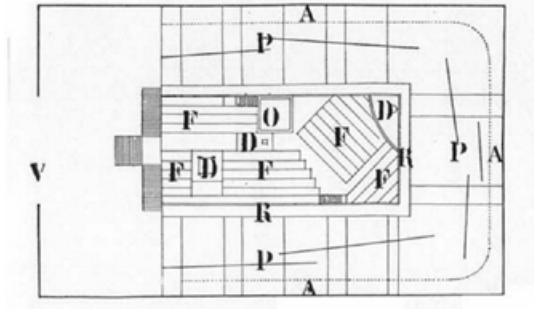


Figure 24. Building containing the Théâtre de l'Espace designed by Paul Tournon for the Exposition International des Arts et Metiers, Paris, 1937 (Read, 2006).



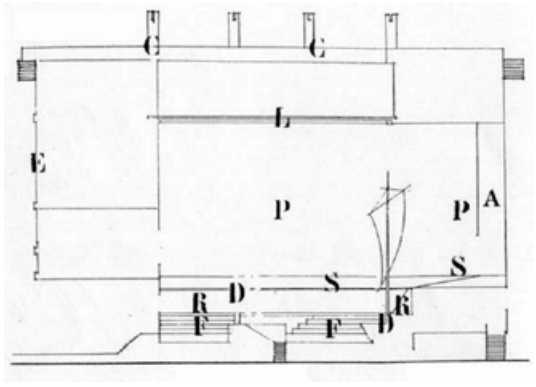




Figure 25. Left: Plan, Section and Elevation drawn by Edouard Autant (Read, 2006),

*A - Transparent Atmospheric Band (open to fresh air)*
*C – Counterweights for moveable ceiling*
*D – Scenery (Improvised)*
*E – Closed-circuit television screen showing performances in progress*
*F – Seating for Audience*
*L – Moveable Ceiling (Fresh air and weather protection)*
*O – Orchestra funnel*
*P – Panoramic Stage*
*R – Mirrors*
*V – Entry Hall*
*T – Advertising Posters*

Figure 26. View from stage showing scenery panels overlapping windows above the heads of actors. Retractable ceiling and skylights flood theatre with sunlight during the day and frame view of heavens at night. Layered scenes, views and light proposed spatial experience of a modern public plaza (Read, 2006).

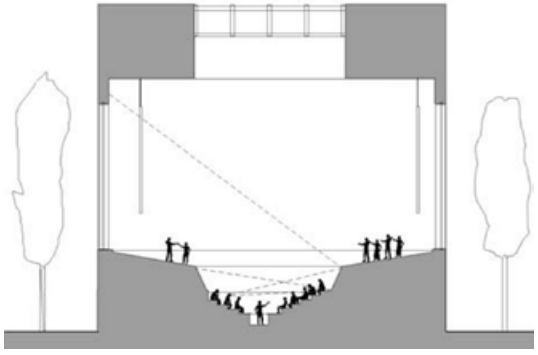


Figure 27. Cross-section based on Autant's sketches and photos of the built hall. Actors perform at the lowest level between sections of spectators and on the upper surrounding stage (Read, 2006).

Figure 28. Interior based on Edouard Autant's plan and section. Actors play improvised scenes in lower area between audience bleachers and choreographed drama on upper surrounding stage. Tilted mirrors reflect action behind spectators (Read, 2006).