

TXP
TODO POR LA PRAXIS



PREFACE

In an artist residency, encounters with the unexpected are paramount, for a residency necessarily implies confrontation, discovery and openness, be it at the human, the institutional or the contextual level. At the outset of the Casino Luxembourg artist-in-residence programme, in 2010, the “Aquarium” pavilion served as a sort of “safe haven” for the participants, a home base or *pied-à-terre* where they could evolve and develop an artistic project. The projects were accessible to informed visitors who deliberately sought to engage with art, who came to Casino Luxembourg for that specific purpose. These conditions were clearly ideal for any artist in residence, since everything was structured and controllable. But before long this “safeness” came to be felt as an obstacle, even a burden by some residents. Being limited to a given space became increasingly problematic, and artists began leaving the pavilion to search Luxembourg City, the real context of their residency, for places more conducive to their creativity. Spurning the circumscribed exhibition space to seek out the hustle and bustle of public space and engage and share with its users seemed to be a logical consequence.

As a result, we revised the call for residency applications for 2015, but not without apprehension. How would artists react to this new orientation? Would the residency attract as many applicants as in previous years? Our fears quickly proved unfounded with the receipt of 250 applications, from which the jury – composed of Lara Almarcegui, artist, Rotterdam (NL); Philippe Nathan, architect and founder of 2007, Differdange (LU); Camilla Pin, independent curator and activist, Isola Art Center, Milan (IT); Georg Winter, artist and activist, professor at HBK Saar (Sculpture/Public Art), Sarrebruck (DE); and Christine Walentiny, residency curator at Casino Luxembourg (LU) – selected the first two artists to be invited as residents under this new approach: the Spanish collective *Todo por la Praxis* (TXP) and the Georgian artist Tekla Aslanishvili (whose project will be presented in 2016).





Todo por la Praxis's atypical profile and socially engaged practice captivated the jury but raised numerous questions, particularly as to the relevance of Luxembourg's environment for artists accustomed to working in large Spanish and Latin American cities. Wouldn't these artists-architects-designers-activists find it disappointing to work in placid Luxembourg, given their experience in harsher social surroundings? Todo por la Praxis would put that worry to rest.

For their project, they chose a small, nameless plot of public land at the junction of the Viaduc/ Passerelle bridge and Pétrusse Boulevard. The site had been abandoned for years, simply closed off with wire fencing. But its strategic location near the train station district, one of the city's smallest yet most densely populated neighbourhoods, seemed to offer what Todo por la Praxis was looking for: the seeming air of a big city, with its expanse of urban infrastructure and residential areas. The plot was ideally situated on a busy route used by all sorts of people, from local residents – like the old man who regularly walked his dogs there – to commuters walking to work from the train station and crossing the Pétrusse River Valley at that point on the 290-meter bridge which, since 1861, has connected the “new” station district with the Old Town. At night, the lush greenery surrounding the site provides shelter for drug addicts and outcasts.

Reclaiming this space for collective use was a challenge. It meant designing an installation that would entice passers-by, make them want to venture into it or, better yet, to get involved.

The Spanish collective's project consisted of revitalising the space in a gentle manner. Its title, **Archive TAZ**, was a first attempt to familiarise the local public with the notion of community initiatives, such as exist in many other countries. Archival material presented in the form of outsized brochures documented some fifty citizen projects. The artists' goal was to transform the project into a Temporary Autonomous Zone – a term coined by the anarchist Hakim Bey – comprising a community garden, a convivial gathering area and participatory workshops open to everyone.¹

Throughout its development and its production, the project was collaborative. The Spanish masterminds, Jon Garbizu and Diego Peris, were backed by a team that worked discreetly behind the scenes. Some members even came to lend a hand in the final days of completing the installation and to help with the group workshops.

1 The drawing by Diego Lopez on page 12 is a poetic interpretation of the Temporary Autonomous Zone concept described by Hakim Bey in his book of that name.

The project quickly became a collective effort at the local level, too, driven by the motivation and goodwill of countless enthusiasts of Todo por la Praxis's initiative. Without this show of solidarity and a willingness to take risks, **Archive TAZ** probably never would have seen the light of day.

Here, we want to express heartfelt gratitude to everyone who embraced and contributed to this dynamic. Our thanks go to the City of Luxembourg, in particular to Mayor Lydie Polfer, Christiane Sietzen and Laurent Schwaller for their advice, and to all of the municipal departments involved in the adventure.

Casino Luxembourg is especially grateful to Lux-Échafaudages and Alliance des Artisans (Groupe Guy Rollinger), whose financial support allowed the project to attain the scope sought by the artists. Sincere thanks to Yves Lucius for his know-how, which was invaluable all through the planning process. And many thanks to Alain Weyrich for being so efficient.

In addition, we are indebted to the Administration des Ponts et Chaussées, particularly Tom Bleyer, for providing the lane dividers.

We also want to thank Joe and Jeff Schmitz of 1vision for supplying the panels, Christian Stoos for his generous assistance with the garden, Claude Weber for his repeatedly helping hand, Frank Adams for his enthusiasm and his involvement in the gardening workshop, David Galassi for coordinating the hip-hop concert, and Éric Chenal for the magnificent bird's-eye views of the installation.

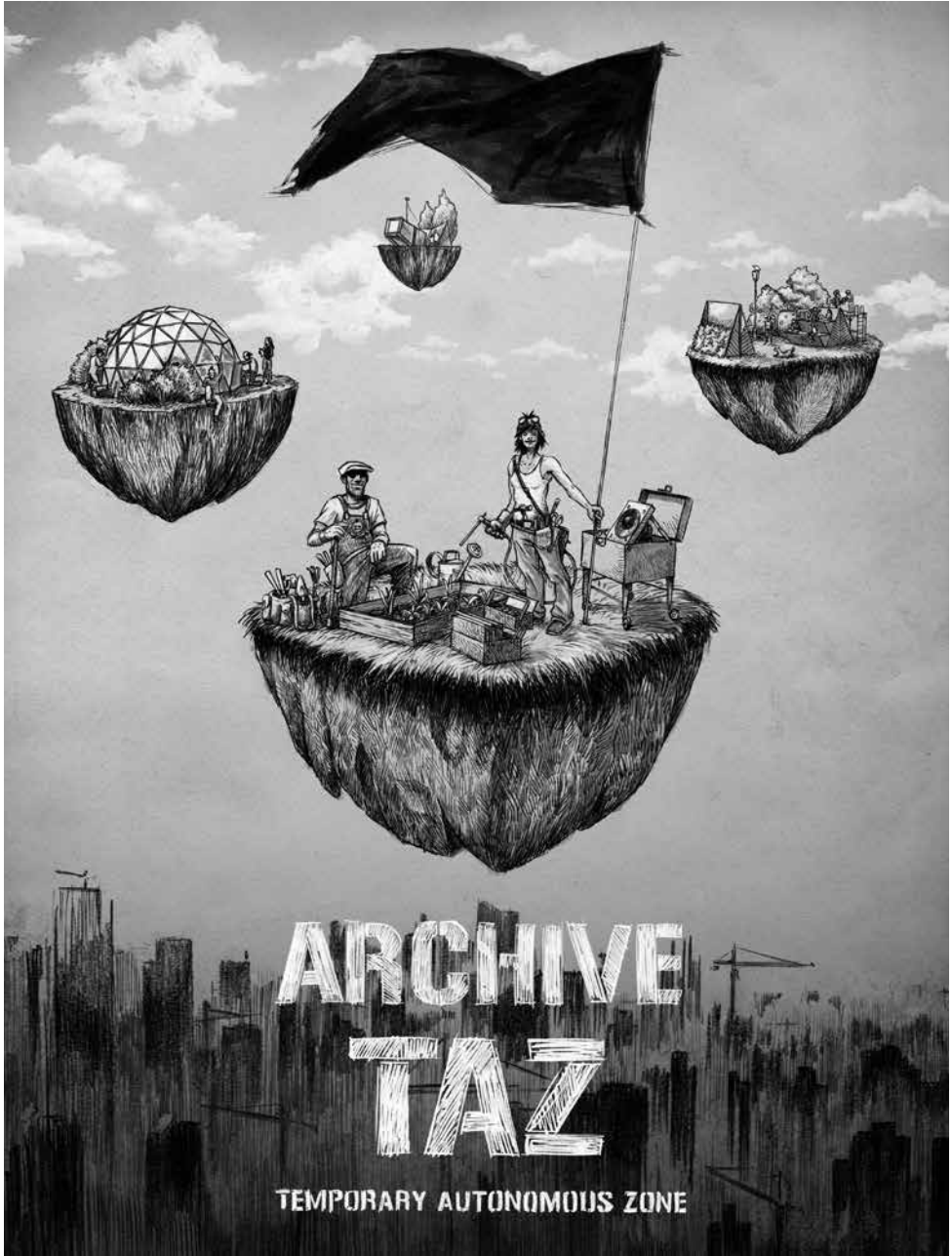
And last, but far from least, we thank the artists and their team for having proposed such a singular, socially engaged and community-rallying project that proved to be surprising in more ways than one.

Christine Walentiny, residency curator

Kevin Muhlen, artistic director of Casino Luxembourg

ARCHIVE TAZ
(TEMPORARY
AUTONOMOUS
ZONE)

BY TODO POR LA PRAXIS



ARCHIVE T&Z

TEMPORARY AUTONOMOUS ZONE

The sea-rovers and corsairs of the 18th century created an 'information network' that spanned the globe: primitive and devoted primarily to grim business, the net nevertheless functioned admirably. Scattered throughout the net were islands, remote hideouts where ships could be watered and provisioned, booty traded for luxuries and necessities. Some of these islands supported 'intentional communities', whole mini-societies living consciously outside the law and determined to keep it up, even if only for a short but merry life ...

... Recently Bruce Sterling, one of the leading exponents of cyberpunk science fiction, published a near-future romance based on the assumption that the decay of political systems will lead to a decentralized proliferation of experiments in living: giant worker-owned corporations, independent enclaves devoted to 'data piracy', green-social-democrat enclaves, zerowork enclaves, anarchist liberated zones, etc. The information economy which supports this diversity is called 'the net'; the enclaves (and the book's title) are 'islands in the net'.

... I believe that by extrapolating from past and future stories about 'islands in the net' we may collect evidence to suggest that a certain kind of 'free enclave' is not only possible in our time but also existent. All my research and speculation has crystallized around the concept of the temporary autonomous zone.¹

'Temporary Autonomous Zone', commonly identified by the initials TAZ, is the title of an essay written by Hakim Bey and published 1991 describing the socio-political tactics of creating temporary spaces that elude formal structures of social control. According to Hakim Bey, the theory of the Temporary Autonomous Zone deals with existing or emerging situations and not utopias, as he holds that temporary autonomous zones are not something that 'will' or 'should' happen but are actually happening today.

1 Quoted from: Hakim Bey, *T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone*, New York (NY): Autonomedia, 1991.

We can find these temporary autonomous spaces in many cities in the form of urban allotment gardens and self-managed social or cultural centres. Through organised or informal structures, many residents' groups are taking an active role in reclaiming and finding a use for these areas, which had no envisaged purpose or were considered residual or abandoned spaces, and are coming up with alternative ways of revitalising them.

These initiatives underway in our cities are what we consider as TAZ – islands in the territory, scattered around our cities and providing an alternative to planned urban development and the logic imposed by social control. These spaces give rise to small self-governing niches that allow people to be directly involved in decision making. Their political stances are diverse, but what all these islands have in common is the proposal of alternatives by self-organised interest groups.

They are the testing ground for a new urban self-management that is witnessing the spontaneous development of more virtuous models of direct participation. These models can constitute a step forward in improving not only representative democracy but also participatory democracy, as well as progress towards an idea of more direct citizen involvement.

An urban allotment garden, for example, stems from the need for green spaces in an over-urbanised city. But it can also be an alternative to production, challenging the established consumer logic. It can even be a space for socialising through the enjoyment of gardening as a pastime, where interest is centred on creating communities in response to the fragmentation of society and proposing an alternative leisure activity. People become involved in allotment gardening for various reasons, but there is a common interest and shared management.

The garden can be a simple or complex infrastructure depending on the interests of the community who support it. It can have a compost bin or a nursery, but it can also engage in related activities such as workshops on bioconstruction, creating seed banks or setting up markets for organic produce. The garden can entail functionalist dynamics that range from upkeep to organising consumer groups and structuring production in accordance with a whole community's food requirements.

The garden can also merely be a pretext for a variety of activities, some related to vegetable growing or responsible consumption, and others that can also extend to other fields such as cultural,

leisure or sporting events, all in the same space. In this case the garden is a driving force for other complementary interests that underpin a broader and more complex model that is organisationally developed around the interests of the community that supports it.

This island can function in turn as part of a network with other spaces, which share political demands, propose common knowledge banks or organise transfers of skills among the various spaces by staging joint activities in order to create synergies between citizens' initiatives. These networks can generate empowering critical masses for proposing more structured political alternatives and establishing them as alternatives to the prevailing model.

Archive TAZ is an observatory that collects these experiences of self-organised spaces, bottom-up citizens' initiatives or tactical urbanism interventions – spaces and projects that propose urban changes through direct action by means of processes that involve citizens in building an alternative bottom-up city.

Archive TAZ produces a directory of projects, which compiles information about these initiatives in summarised form, extracting the details and aspects relevant to understanding them from an initiatory perspective.

However, rather than carry out a purely descriptive task, we are interested in highlighting the key features that allow these communities to be established and set in motion. Therefore we look at aspects such as the organisational model on which they are based, the decision-making system, the funding model that provides their financial underpinning or the legal framework for interceding with the institution. We are also interested in finding out the contents, activities and groups that support it, and the channels for taking part and contributing to the common project.

Archive TAZ also functions as a guide for starting up new projects based on experiences already carried out. The archive is a tool for comparative readings and makes it possible to extract and extrapolate strategies that can provide a response to common interests or specific issues in similar contexts.

In addition, this archive is designed to be a tool for the initiatives and projects that are part of it; the aim is to create a platform for linking up with these experiences in order to become an interface for establishing connections and networks with different projects.

During this initial phase of setting up the archive, we have gathered about 50 projects in both Europe and Latin America:

Alte Feuerwache (Cologne, Germany), **Kunstwerk** (Cologne, Germany), **56 Saint-Blaise** (Paris, France), **L'Avant Rue** (Paris, France), **Mix'Art Myrys** (Toulouse, France), **Cascina Cuccagna** (Milan, Italy) **Fábrica do Braço de Prata** (Lisbon, Portugal), **LX Factory** (Lisbon, Portugal), **Mouraria** (Lisbon, Portugal), **Germanetes** (Barcelona, Spain), **La fabrika de toda la vida** (Los Santos de Maimona, Spain), **La Tabacalera** (Madrid, Spain), **Montamarta** (Madrid, Spain), **Naquerant Espais** (Naquera, Spain), **Patio Maravillas** (Madrid, Spain), **Re-Gen Huesca** (Huesca, Spain), **San Fermín** (Madrid, Spain), **Seco** (Madrid, Spain), **SK8 + U** (Arbúcies, Spain), **Solar Corona** (Valencia, Spain), **Tramallol** (Seville, Spain) **Wikitoki** (Bilbao, Spain), **Alg-a Lab** (Valladares, Spain), **Astra** (Gernika-Lumo, Spain), **Box.A** (Tolosa, Spain), **Calafou** (Barcelona, Spain), **Campo de Cebada** (Madrid, Spain), **Can Batlló** (Barcelona, Spain), **Can Masdeu** (Barcelona, Spain), **La Casa Invisible** (Malaga, Spain), **Casa Pumarejo** (Seville, Spain), **Eskalera Karakola** (Madrid, Spain), **Esta es una plaza** (Madrid, Spain), **ATEA Somos Mexas** (Mexico City, Mexico), **Faro de Oriente** (Mexico City, Mexico), **La Casa Tomada** (San Salvador, El Salvador), **La Escuela Esperanza** (Ecuador), **Núcleo Cultural La Ye** (Caracas, Venezuela), **Parque Comunal de Manglares Tierra de Sueños** (Maracaibo, Venezuela), **Tiuna El Fuerte** (Caracas, Venezuela), **La Casa de la Lluvia** (Bogotá, Colombia), **La Redada** (Bogotá, Colombia), **Casa do Estudante** (Belo Horizonte, Brazil), **Luiz Estrela** (Belo Horizonte, Brazil), **Martadero** (Cochabamba, Bolivia) **CRAC** (Valparaiso, Chile).

These initiatives stem from the context in which they are implemented and represent the interests of the communities that support them. Such is the case of **Campo de Cebada** in Madrid, a vacant lot resulting from the demolition of the public sports centre in Madrid's La Latina district, which is currently being self-managed by citizens until construction begins in accordance with the envisaged new land use. This initiative has arisen from the joint action of neighbours, cultural agents, residents' associations and local authorities and provides alternative cultural, sporting and leisure activities in the district. It is similar to the **56 Saint-Blaise** project: a vacant, walled-up lot in Paris that lay derelict for years and has been temporarily reclaimed as a community garden through a citizens' initiative.



1. *Campo de Cebada*
2. *Casa Invisible*
3. *Can Batlló, Barcelona*
4. *Faro de Oriente*



2.



3.



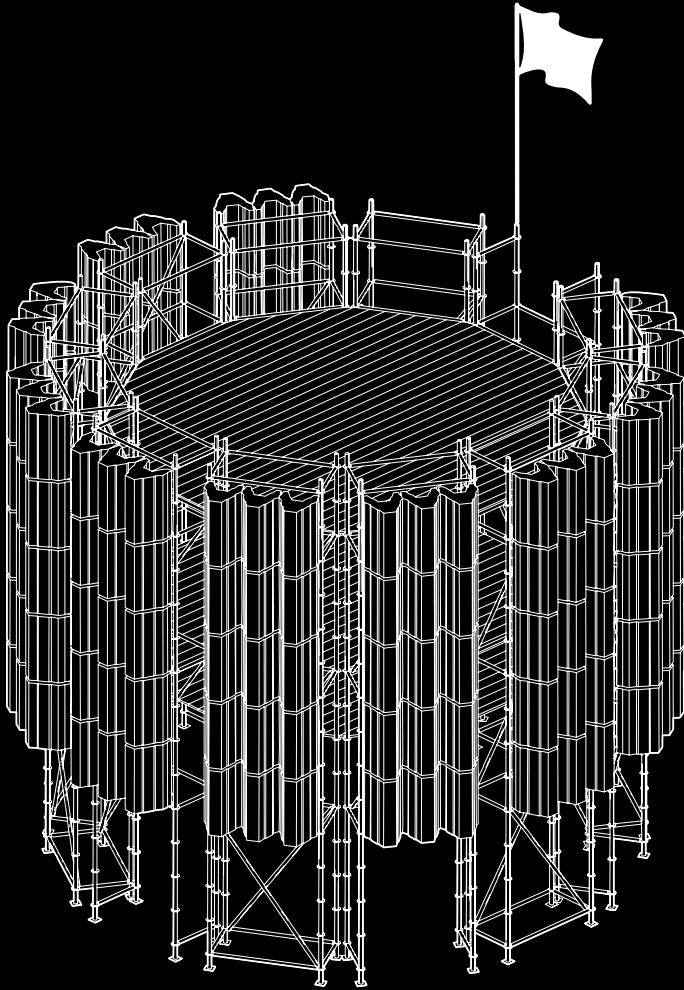
4.

In other cases an empty space is occupied and reclaimed with more structured projects designed to be more influential and lasting, such as the **Can Batlló** project in Barcelona, which involves utilising a major industrial infrastructure that remained empty and unused for decades. In this case the idea is to recover the space for the districts' residents to use as local amenities, social housing cooperatives, work cooperatives and urban allotment gardens.

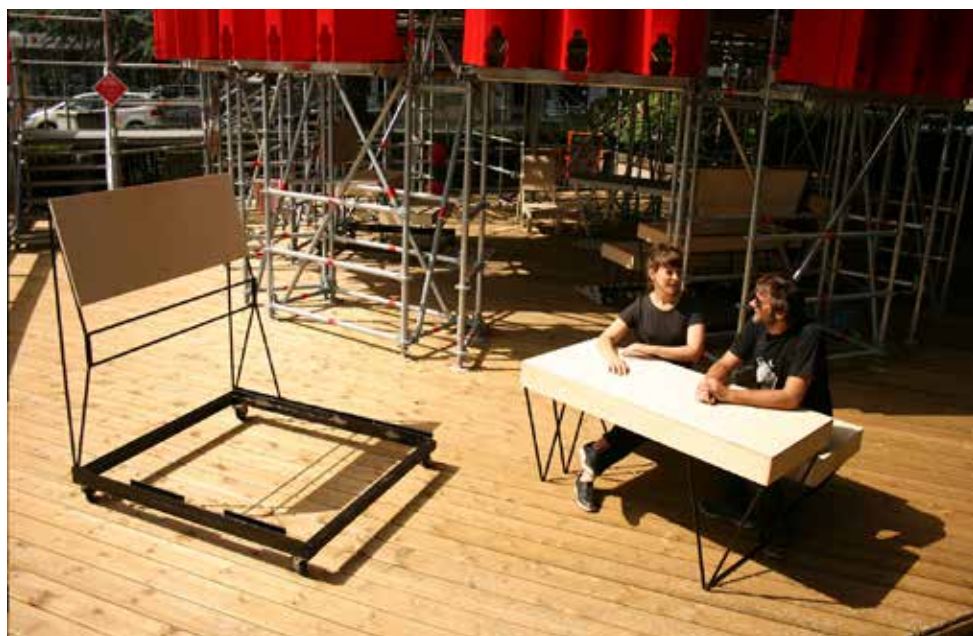
A similar case is **Astra Gernika**, which has reclaimed a former arms factory that is now a social factory for culture, thanks to the effort of many people, groups and institutions. This open space for cultural creation, social change, interaction and experimentation is self-managed by an open assembly in which young people and cultural groups take part.

Many of the initiatives involve reclaiming spaces as social and cultural centres that are open to citizens and provide an alternative to institutional channels. Such is the case of **Alte Feuerwache** in Cologne, which entails creating an open, participatory infrastructure by reviving the former fire station. A similar example is **La Casa Invisible** in Malaga, an abandoned building that has been occupied and turned into a social and cultural centre run by citizens on the basis of cooperation, collaborative production and free culture, with local creators playing a prominent role. It promotes training projects in social, political, technological, artistic and creative environments in order to encourage critical thought, citizen empowerment, social creativity and collective action. Other projects, like **Mix'Art Myrys** in Toulouse and **Faro de Oriente** in Mexico, provide alternatives for artists and creators through residencies and spaces for production.

Others still promote the setting up of productive spaces designed to achieve economically sustainable projects, such as the **Tiuna El Fuerte** cultural park, which is based on an academic and recreational production system for providing services in arts, trades and communication. And **Tramallol** in Seville is a model of collective enterprise based on horizontal cooperation, exchange and the pursuit of other forms of economic management of culture in various social spheres, through self-organisation.









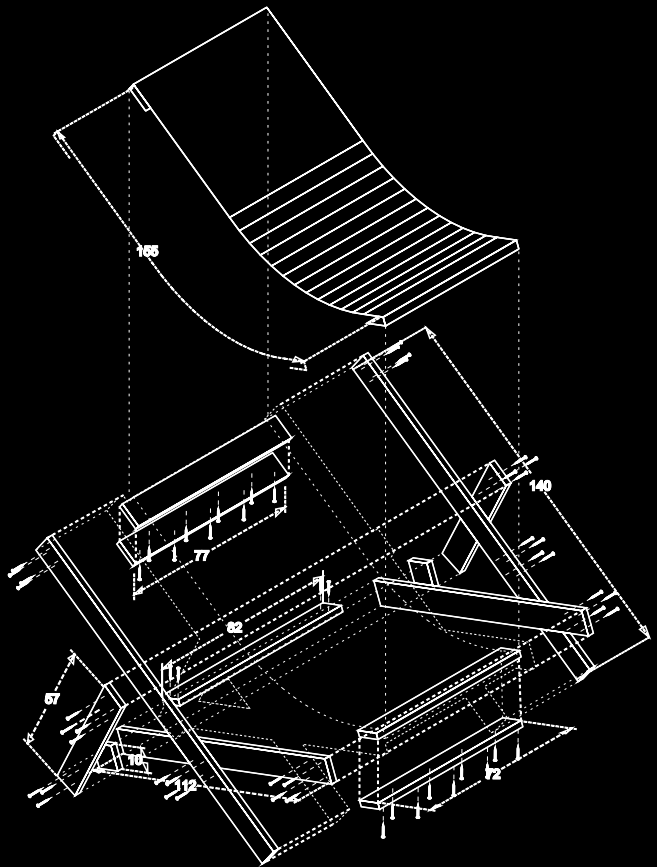


The **Archive TAZ** installation in Luxembourg was intended to be a space where all these experiences in different parts of the world are kept together, becoming established as a temporary autonomous zone in the city. It was structured as an interface of this network of temporary autonomous zones. During its three-month installation in the public space in the city, it represented an **alternative model** to traditional public spaces, generated **new content** and made possible **new logics**. Both its digital and its analogue format were designed to give visibility to the project and generate connections, synergies and exchanges. Its presence in Luxembourg was therefore aimed initially at reinforcing the work being performed through various channels and platforms with the ultimate intention of creating networks for collaborating with local communities to encourage their involvement and incorporation into **Archive TAZ**. **Archive TAZ** is a tactic urban initiative which, despite its small scale, low cost and temporary nature, sets out to improve the area where it is located. In Luxembourg, the square at the junction of the Viaduc/Passerelle bridge and Pétrusse Boulevard was transformed into a community space open to the city that provided an alternative to the residual, closed and unused space that previously existed.

Although it didn't originate from a participatory mechanism with respect to its design and execution, it did incorporate *bottom-up* processes in different ways. The clearest case was the community garden where a citizens' network provided collaborative care. It furthermore extended an indirect invitation to citizens to take over the space and propose various activity programmes there.

The construction was very simple, designed on the basis of replicability, low cost and the reclaiming of materials for a second lease of life. It consisted of a scaffolding-like structure forming a circular seven-metre-high tower with two storeys. It measured six metres in diameter, with wooden floors and a staircase running round the perimeter providing access to each of

ARCHIVE TAZ
INSTALLATION
IN LUXEMBOURG







the storeys. The perimeter was covered in vertically arranged Jersey barriers (plastic barriers for separating lanes of traffic). These elements created permeable planes that functioned as a lattice, dividing up the space and affording the façade its unique character. All these elements had a temporary useful life and were subsequently used conventionally as construction material or as urban furniture.

The pieces of furniture created for the intervention (jardinières, benches, stands) were given a second lease of life through a local group. In any event, they were all made according to *creative commons* criteria – open, freely distributed – and there were assembly manuals that allowed them to be replicated and reproduced by any citizen interested in doing so. They supported a basic idea that underpins the archive, which is to generate open-source architecture.

The **Archive TAZ** infrastructure gave way to diverse activities, generating a public space that could be used for assemblies, screenings, concerts, summer cinema, etc. The garden was a space for building an environment collaboratively, the archive was aimed at creating a space for exchange, and the *assembly area* was the meeting place. This, coupled with basic infrastructure such as running water and electricity, gave it an unusual potential for the use of public space to develop content and activities.

Todo por la Praxis (TXP) together with Casino Luxembourg had imagined some initial activities as triggers in order to open up a range of possibilities and lines of work. Community garden workshops, screenings, collaborative construction workshops and concerts were held, exploring various lines of work and potentials for intervention. Though perhaps what interested us in particular was getting citizens to take over through a more spontaneous use that meets the needs and interests of local *user communities* of the city of Luxembourg.

Installing a Temporary Autonomous Zone in a physical space poses institutional challenges, whether in the form of permits or the design of a management model for a hybrid public space. Although it is invisible and goes unnoticed, this is a very important issue as it opens up new channels for citizen negotiation and new horizons beyond the temporary. Deciding how to use

this space, to define its opening hours and activities are just some of the challenges posed by a construction of these characteristics, which requires new protocols and defines an alternative model of citizen co-management.

It is very common for excessive regulation of public space to restrict the activities that take place in it. In most cases applications for an activity permit involve a lot of red tape that spaces such as **Archive TAZ** are capable of skipping. This place is a hybrid space where activities can be carried out and programmed outside the rules that govern the ordinary use of public spaces.

And it is here that an interesting space arises, designed as a place in the city that provides possibilities of citizen involvement, overcoming administrative constraints – a space that offers alternative programmes outside the institutional agenda and allows for a spontaneous programming that meets specific needs and interests, involving new codes and *new logics*.



ARCHIVE TAZ

DISPLAYS

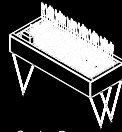
FLOORS & USES

On the second floor is the community garden, a space for citizen co-management connecting with local initiatives in the city.

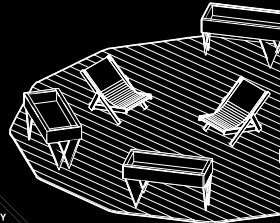
Through gardenbox device, which controls the moisture level in the soil, a dynamic collaborative irrigation with neighbors interested in the maintenance of the garden is articulated.



Beach chair



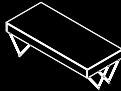
Garden Box



COMMUNITY GARDEN

On the first floor is the archive space, a space for reading and querying the database projects of the TAZ archive.

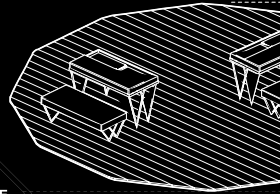
In this first phase we collected about 50 projects, both in Europe and Latin America.



Bench



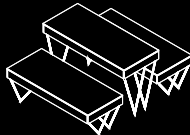
Archive



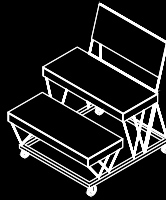
THE ARCHIVE

On the ground floor is the assemblydrome, a space equipped with mobile stands that allows multiple combinations.

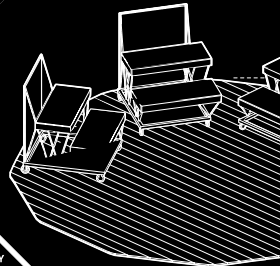
This is a multipurpose space that enables multiple activities: Assemblies, screenings, concerts, summer cinema, meetings, talks, etc ...



Trading table



Grandstand



ASSEMBLY & MEETING

T.A.Z.
FACILITY



Collaborative gardening!
Thanks to the
TAZ MOISTURE SENSOR BOX
you can check soil moisture online:
www.archivetaz.org/gardenbox



*Please use the tap on the
ground floor to water the
plants of our community
garden.*



*Directory of citizen
self organized spaces,
interrelated all around
the world.*



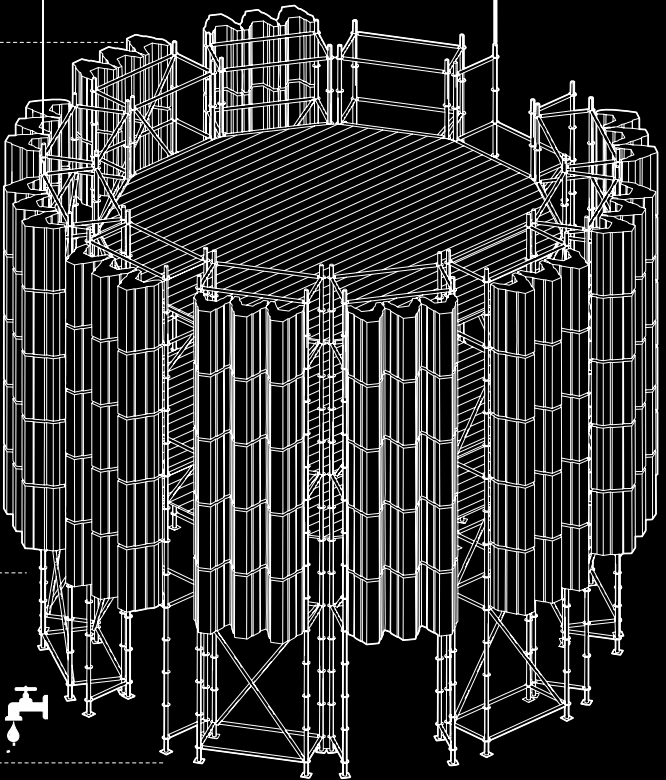
*Virtual directory at
www.archivetaz.org*



*Please play with furniture,
colonize the space
& enjoy it.*

- + shows
- + concerts
- + projections
- + theatre
- + assembly & meeting
- + [...]

Go & Take the Square!!!



IMPRINT

Exhibition

The present publication has been published as a complement to the project **Archive TAZ** by the Spanish collective **Todo por la Praxis**. The project took place in the public space of the city of Luxembourg from 1 June until 30 August 2015 within the artist-in-residence programme organised by Casino Luxembourg.

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