

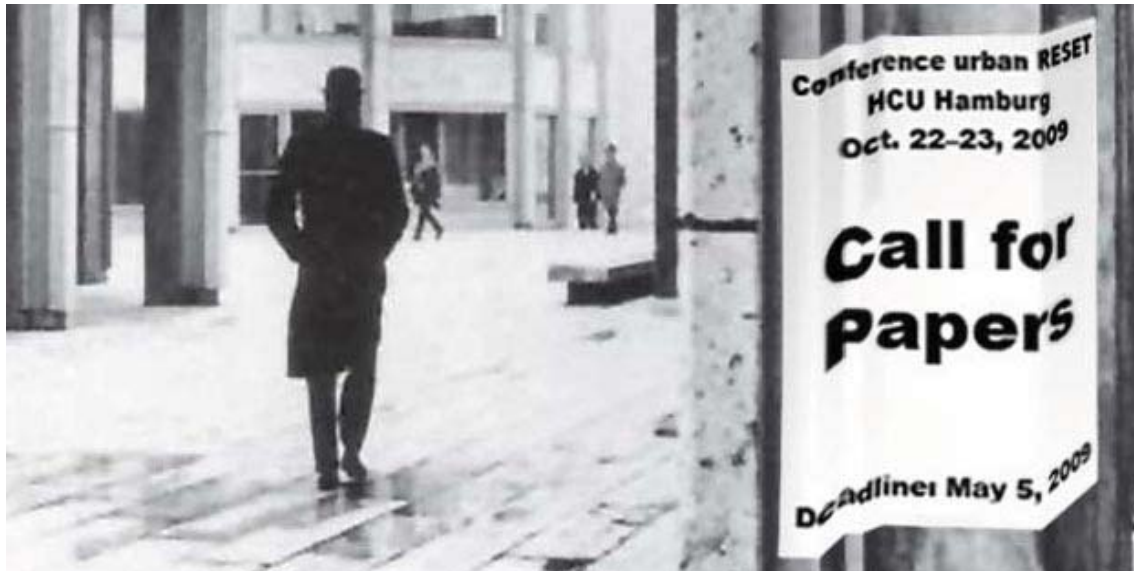
urban RESET: DISCLOSING THE IMMANENT POTENTIALS OF URBAN SPACES

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Urban RESET

Urban reality constantly requires fundamentally new spatial arrangements in order to face ever emerging challenges. Many of the urbanistic forms imprinted in contemporary cities have

been shaped by the needs and constraints of the industrial period. Although they have been focal points of urban life at the time they were built today they have lost the functions and abilities they once had. They could be

described as voids – although they still cannot be missed due to their sheer dimensions.

At the same time there is growing evidence that such remnants of the past are being reread in innovative ways, for example within projects such as the Toni-Areal in Zurich or the Ile-de-Nantes in Nantes. Both refrain from knee-jerk tabula rasa-strategies; instead they investigate the options offered by the existing urban texture and foster its continuous transformation. In these processes architectural creativity plays a key role. It explores existing structures from unconventional perspectives und reinterprets them in the context of current challenges – mostly together with stakeholders from other backgrounds. In reshaping urban spaces, reprogramming buildings and revising the logics of urbanistic predeterminations, architecture is able to reveal the hidden potentials of existing structures and to reorient everyday urban life: In this sense architecture provokes an urban RESET.

Architectural or urban design interventions powerful enough to cause an urban RESET differ fundamentally from “critical reconstruction” or the revitalization of urban brownfield sites. They rather suggest an independent category of creativity: a type of conceptual design practice, which has the potential to generate lasting effects at city level. The specific abilities of this kind of urban design interventions make it worthwhile examining the design and conceptual processes involved on multiple levels. In urban RESET there seem to be three constitutive and interdependent elements: RECONSIDER means a novel mode of reflecting the urban structure, its typologies and open spaces – entirely independent of previous functional limitations. RELAUNCHING is the

conceptual reinterpretation and the physical inscription of the new reading. REINTEGRATION finally reconnects the altered space with the urban context through built elements on different scales and innovative ways of activating previously untapped potentials.

The conference urban RESET at the HafenCity University Hamburg intends to bring various topics indicating an urban RESET together. It aims at launching a cross-disciplinary debate on procedures and strategies necessary to retrieve the immanent potentials of large-scale urban structures using case studies as a starting point. Our Call for Papers addresses architects, urban designers and urban planners, historians, social and cultural scientists as well as political scientists and economists. Contributions may focus on single objects, compare multiple interventions or concentrate on specific aspects of urban RESET. These results will explore how urban design potentially can open novel fields of options and opportunities within the existing urban reality.

The results of this conference will be documented in a publication or possibly in a special issue of ARCH+ journal. Abstracts for contributions (max. 1.500 characters) may be submitted with a CV (approx. 300 characters) until May 5, 2009 to: reset@metropolitanculture.net or alternatively to

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