

# THE POLITICS OF SPATIAL PRACTICE

An interdisciplinary programme bringing together architects, planners, government representatives and the public to rethink and energise the relationship between spatial design practice and politics

Proposal for collaborative enquiries

## **INTRODUCTION AND AIMS**

Design and planning are inherently political acts, yet we continue to see a widening of the divide between these disciplines and political decision making. Many of the issues we are currently facing - economic, social and environmental - are more and more becoming spatial concerns. They have a profound impact on our cities and on the requirements for design practice. The Politics of Spatial Practice programme at ANCB poses the question of how fruitful collaborations might be established that lead to effective and politically-engaged professional practice in the built environment.

The programme began with the series **Design and Politics: The Next Phase**, which argued that a political agenda in design has the potential to address the complex challenges facing cities in a more effective manner than is currently being achieved. This thinking led to a further series, **ReTooling the Trades**, which expanded the focus to examine working methods, approaches, strategies, processes and systems that are key to a more relevant and engaged spatial design and planning profession.

## **TIME FRAME AND EVENTS SO FAR**

### **Design and Politics: The Next Phase 2011-13**

Collaboration between ANCB and Henk Ovink, Director for Spatial Planning, Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment of the Netherlands, in the form of nine public debates – eight at ANCB in Berlin and one at the Netherlands Architecture Institute in Rotterdam – and a design studio with the TU Delft. The series focused on rethinking and re-energising the relationship between political spatial planning and the design disciplines of architecture and urban design.

### **ReTooling the Trades 2014**

Collaboration with the Netherlands Embassy in Berlin focusing on equipping the urban practitioner with an upgraded set of methods and approaches to respond to the challenges of our time and to engage in responsible and effective urban practice.

### **Urban Interplay - Community, Identity and Space October 2014**

Public debate with lectures by Francine Houben of Mecanoo architecten and Bernadetta Tagliabue reflecting on the importance of interaction in public space and the role of architecture in fostering such conditions.

### **Architecture - Planning - Social Diversity. A Transatlantic Dialogue with Roberta Washington February 2015**

Public debate with a lecture by Roberta Washington drawing on her experiences in architectural practice and her work with the National Organization of Minority Architects in the US to make the voices of minorities heard in discussions about architecture and urban planning.

# FRAMING THE ANCB PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

As an interdisciplinary cultural platform, ANCB does not focus solely on any single knowledge field. Instead it aims with each programme to bring together a range of different viewpoints and areas of expertise in order to stimulate a multi-faceted dialogue with an international outlook. Questions from each programme are framed within ANCB's ongoing 'urban challenges' to activate a broad-ranging exploration and understanding of the subject. Below are a range of starter questions on the relationship between politics and spatial practice.

## MOBILITY

What is the nature of the relationship between mobility and the physical fabric of the city? How can planning facilitate mobility paths and networks? What is the critical scale for mobility in terms of making the city? How does access to mobility affect opportunities in the city? What roles do spatial design and planning play in promoting and implementing different forms of mobility?

## SECURITY

How can design and planning contribute to achieving a balance between security and privacy for all citizens? How can spatial designers work with technology companies and governments to participate in the decisions that affect our built environment? Where does the responsibility for security in the city lie?

## RESILIENCE

Cities and regions today need to be able to cope with a range of possible difficulties, including environmental and economic stresses and population changes. What methods and tools exist to aid architects and planners in this field? How can the city and countryside be built and adapted to cope with change? How can design and planning influence the impact of certain changes?

## RESOURCE CONSUMPTION

What role can design and planning play in raising awareness of resource consumption and depletion? What interdependencies exist - or need to be developed - between design strategies, adaptation methods and policy making in this field? How can integrated solutions with involvement from a range of specialists be achieved? How can climate-oriented design strategies be integrated into the legal and political system and who is responsible for advancing this?

## COMMUNICATION

How can communication between disciplines and fields concerning the built environment be improved? How can plans be better communicated to the public? Which tools might be adopted to improve the accessibility of design and planning communication and to make it easier to understand outside of the professions?

## PARTICIPATION

How important is public participation in design and planning? What methods and approaches encourage participation? Who should be involved in making decisions about the built environment? How can a balance be achieved between valuing specialist input and taking into consideration the views and suggestions of local actors?

## **ANCB FORMATS**

### **Public Debates**

Key figures from a range of disciplines take on questions within the framework of the programme, whether as single events or as a series of debates. Short and provocative presentations jumpstart the discussion between peers, involving a public audience.

### **Design Studios**

University tutors and their students explore an urban challenge defined by the programme enquiry through case study sites. The studios are enriched with lectures and urban tours tailored to the specific topic.

### **Symposium and Workshop**

Thematic focal points of the programme are brought together and reflected upon in a symposium. Defined questions are then drawn out as a basis for workshop proposals by advanced students and young professionals.

### **Publication and Archive**

Results from all of the events are collated and summarised in the programme publication and as part of an ongoing, living archive on the ANCB website.

## **ABOUT ANCB**

ANCB The Aedes Metropolitan Laboratory is a unique cultural and educational platform focusing on the future of our cities. Building upon three decades of expertise in the communication of architecture culture - through exhibiting and publishing the work of internationally acclaimed and pioneering architects and urban planners - Aedes Architecture Forum established, in 2009, an additional urban research and workshop programme - ANCB.

It is from these foundations that ANCB positions itself as the hub at the centre of an extensive international and interdisciplinary research network, based on a structure of cultural exchange and knowledge transfer. ANCB is uniquely placed to bring together key figures from different fields to debate the most pertinent urban questions of international concern and to search for new potential to improve global urban living conditions. Through interdisciplinary idea exchanges and workshops with international university partners, ANCB brings together social, cultural and technical research with governance processes, industry products and the proposals of the urban design and planning professions, generating the cross-sector collaborations necessary to offer innovative insights, positions and visions.