

## Chapter 8

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# Writing transparadiso: Across and beside

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## Introduction

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transparadiso, comprising architect-trained artist, Barbara Holub and architect/urban designer, Paul Rajakovics, based in Vienna, but working internationally, have, over the past 10-15 years, produced a complex assembly of artefacts and events—art installations, performance pieces, video works, urban interventions, master plans, design competition entries and completed works of architecture and urban design—often with other professionals, clients, planners, user groups and urban citizens.

In the text that follows, in the spirit of my site-writing practice (Rendell 2010), I attempt to write transparadiso. In so doing I pick-up on many of the dominant moods and modes of their operation—two of them evident in their name which includes the prepositions: *trans*—across and *para*—beside. My intention is to write across and beside the different facets of their methodology which continually experiment with combining attitudes to urbanism held by art, architecture and planning: always critical, astute and questioning, but also playful. Acknowledging the importance of three in understandings of transitional space and transversality in the work of D.W. Winnicott, André Green and Félix Guattari, the text is trivalent: the first two texts are placed beside or 'para' to one another, positioning the voice of a theorist/philosopher in parallel with that of a practitioner;<sup>1</sup> my own voice comes in as a third, writing across the space of relation between the other two. The three voices are distinct and do not attempt to define or explain each other, rather they allow for different associations and connections to be made by the reader.

## Transitional Space

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This potential space is at the interplay between there being nothing but me and there being objects and phenomena outside omnipotent control. [...] I have tried to draw attention to the importance both in theory and in practice of a third area, that of play which expands into creative living and into the whole cultural life of man. This third area has been contrasted with inner or personal psychic reality and with the actual world in which the individual lives and which can be objectively perceived (Winnicott 1967).<sup>2</sup>

*Jemand'sland 1997/2011: In 1997 Paul Rajakovics was invited by ACMA Milano to lead an architecture workshop in Gorizia (Italy) on the issue of the border. Together with his students he collected drawings of the residents of Gorizia and Nova Gorica (Slovenia) as a response to three questions on the future of the two cities. The visions turned out to be quite traumatic so that he decided to continue to work on the project, but with young people. One year later he returned with his partners (Bernd Vlay and Margarethe Müller) to Gorizia and continued the project spremembazione. In a casting party four young Italians and four young Slovenians were invited to show their favourite places. As the final event, spremembazione managed to remove the border at the Piazzale della Transalpina in front of the*

*train station. For the duration of a cross-border badminton game the video camera was placed on a pedestal replacing the fence. On 1 May 2004, the EU-border was lifted as Slovenia joined the EU. The fence in front of the train station was removed and a circle was placed there instead. Over time, flower pots were added, installing a new barrier...*

The focus of the theory of object relations created and developed by the Independent British Analysts is the unconscious relationship that exists between a subject and his/her objects, both internally and externally (Kohon 1986: 20).<sup>3</sup> In continuing to explore the internal world of the subject, their work can be thought of as a continuation of Sigmund Freud's research, but there are also important differences, particularly in the way that the instincts are conceptualised and the relative importance assigned to the mother and father in the development of the infant. Exploring the concept of an object relation to describe how bodily drives satisfy their need, Freud theorised the instincts as pleasure-seeking, but Ronald Fairbairn, an influential member of the Independent Group, suggested instead that they were object-seeking, that the libido is not primarily aimed at pleasure but at making relationships with others. For Melanie Klein too, objects play a decisive role in the development of a subject and can be either part-objects, like the breast, or whole-objects, like the mother. But whereas for Freud, it is the relationship with the father that retrospectively determines the relationship with the mother, for Klein, it is the experience of separation from the first object, the breast that determines all later experiences.<sup>4</sup>

Following on and also developing aspects of Klein's work, D.W. Winnicott introduced the idea of a transitional object, related to, but distinct from, both the external object, the mother's breast, and the internal object, the introjected breast. For Winnicott, the transitional object or the original 'not-me' possession stands for the breast or first object, but the use of symbolism implies the child's ability to make a distinction between fantasy and fact, between internal and external objects (Winnicott 1953: 89, 94; 1969: 711-716; 1991). This ability to keep inner and outer realities separate yet inter-related results in an intermediate area of experience, the 'potential space', which Winnicott claimed is retained and later in life contributes to the intensity of cultural experiences around art and religion. Winnicott discussed cultural experience as located in the 'potential space' between 'the individual and the environment (originally the object)'. In Winnicott's terms, for the baby this is the place between the 'subjective object and the object objectively perceived' (Winnicott 1967: 371).

## **Paramedics**

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In German, the word *Klinik* signifies a hospital for inpatients. The term is derived from the Greek word *klinein*, which means 'lying down'. What in English is called 'clinic' is in German designated as *Ambulatorium*, which is derived from the Latin *ambulare*, 'to walk around' (Danto 1998: 287-300).

On Invitation Only: *The Indikatormobil is a flexible tool for operations in the urban context situated between urban and artistic interventions—a tool for 'Direct Urbanism'. It offers the possibility to include tactile aspects of urban planning into urban planning and urban design transgressing conventional genres. The*

*Indikatormobil operates upon request or invitation as well as taking the initiative to trace urban 'emergencies' and to develop interventions according to the specific context. Parallel to transparadiso's exhibition at the MAK, Vienna, transparadiso held a MAK nite: they invited special guests to a dinner 'on invitation only' in the main hall of the MAK. The non-invited regular visitors of the MAK nite were guided to the courtyard, where the Indikatormobil parked. In that very cold night the guests outside were offered a Russian soup (borschtsch) and hot wine, and they were welcomed by 'Asyl in Not', an organisation taking care of immigrants seeking asylum. A live-video-conference between the main hall of the MAK and the Indikatormobil in the courtyard enabled communication between the selected dinner guests inside and the other guests outside.*

Leading figures for the Austrian Social Democrats, such as Victor Adler and Otto Bauer, put forward proposals for a project of economic and social regeneration, combining culture and politics in a new way. In Vienna, where the Social Democrats had the majority between 1918 and 1934, psychoanalysis played a key role in the process of radical reform, which aimed to create an urban environment that responded to the needs of children and workers' families (Danto 1998: 287-300). In 1918, in his speech in Budapest, and in other speeches and writings, Freud had sanctioned the development of free, psychoanalytic, out-patient clinics, including the Poliklinik in Berlin, which opened in 1920, and the Ambulatorium in Vienna, which opened in 1922 (Kadyrov 2005: 467-82), to which he gave moral and financial support (Danto 1998: 1998: 287-300).

Wilhelm Reich, an Austrian 'Freudo-Marxist' and key member of the Vienna clinic in the twenties, was radicalised by the experience, and in his subsequent work considered social conditions to have an influence on neurosis. He later aimed to make psychoanalysis more accessible by 'setting up free clinics throughout Vienna, even turning the back of a van into a mobile clinic that he would take into working class neighborhoods, dispensing therapeutic advice about emotional problems along with a political message about how sexual misery and family breakdown posed the need for socialism' (Brenner 1999). This practice of mobile psychoanalysis, where help is offered point to point from a moving vehicle, offers a psychic equivalent to the paramedic who comes to the site of the medical emergency equipped to give aid, and reminds me of Gilles Deleuze's comments concerning how theory can be used like a tool.

In a fascinating conversation between philosophers Deleuze and Michel Foucault that took place in 1972, Deleuze reveals quite directly, though certainly abstractly, how he comprehends a 'new relation between theory and practice'. Rather than understanding practice as an application of theory or as the inspiration for theory, Deleuze suggests that these 'new relationships appear more fragmentary and partial' (Foucault and Deleuze 1977: 205), and discusses their relationship in terms of what he calls 'relays': 'Practice is a set of relays from one theoretical point to another, and theory is a relay from one practice to another. No theory can develop without eventually encountering a wall, and practice is necessary for piercing this wall' (1977: 206). For Deleuze, theory is 'not for itself': 'A theory is exactly like a box of tools. [...] It must be useful. It must function. And not for itself. If no one uses it, beginning with the theoretician himself (who then ceases to be a theoretician), then the theory is worthless

or the moment is inappropriate' (1977: 208). Deleuze notes that in its encounter with 'obstacles, walls and blockages', theory requires transformation into another discourse, presumably practice, to 'eventually pass to a different domain' (1977: 206).

It is this possibility of transformation—the potential for change following the relay from theory to practice and back again—that interests me. transparadiso, like many conceptual artists before them, are practitioners highly versed in theoretical discourse, but they do not see themselves as 'theoreticians'; however, in reflecting critically upon the procedures they employ and the ideological questions raised by a close attention to methodology, to practice after conceptualism is to perform a kind of theory. The practice of transparadiso offers them a kind of theoretical 'tool kit'—arriving on site they are prepared to provide 'help' in a given situation—offering space and time for tricky issues to be aired, and inviting questions to be played out and tested in different domains. It is not the way of transparadiso to put forward immediate quick-fix solutions to long-term problems. Instead their process is more like the slow and fluctuating process of psychoanalysis with all its loops, blockages, dead-ends and detours, involving conversations which might start casually in the 'back of a van', yet provide strategies that work their way towards the future over a much longer term, sometimes with intended consequences, at other times unexpected and surprising.

### ***Transference***

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The analytic object is neither internal (to the analysand or to the analyst), nor external (to either the one or the other), but is situated between the two. So it corresponds precisely to Winnicott's definition of the transitional object and to its location in the intermediate area of potential space, the space of 'overlap' demarcated by the analytic setting (Green 1978: 180).

Commons come to Liezen: *Liezen's town park was previously and is still today an orchard serving as a common. A pavilion was erected there that functions first of all as a storage space for large-scale tangram pieces. The pieces were sold as a limited edition of art objects and as part of a collective work of art. As they were sold, the pavilion emptied out. The proceeds went directly back to Liezen and to the local population, and were earmarked for events which took place in the pavilion. Months before the pavilion was built, transparadiso invited the public to play tangram. While people were playing, they could discuss vital topics concerning the city and its future.* (See Figures 1 and 2).

Figures 1 and 2: transparadiso, *Commons come to Liezen* (2011). Photographs: transparadiso.

The 'setting' is a term used to describe the conditions within which the psychoanalytic encounter occurs. Following Freud, these conditions include 'arrangements' about time and money, as well as 'certain ceremonials' governing the physical positions of analysand (lying on a couch and speaking) and analyst (sitting behind the analysand on a chair and listening) (Freud [1913] 1958: 126, 133). Coined by Winnicott, 'as the sum of all the details of management that are more or less accepted by all psychoanalysts' (Nissin Momigliano 1992: 33–34), the term has been modified by others. In the work of José Bleger the setting comprises both the process of psychoanalysis, and the non-process or frame, which provides a set of constants, or limits, to the 'behaviours' that occur within it (Bleger 1967: 518). And in terms of its spatial configuration, Jean Laplanche considers the setting to be a double-walled tub (Laplanche 1999: 226),<sup>5</sup> and for André Green it is a casing or casket that holds the 'jewel' of the psychoanalytic process (Green 2005: 33).<sup>6</sup>

Green has drawn attention to the setting not as a static tableau, but as a psychoanalytic apparatus, not as a representation of psychic structure, but as an expression of it. For Green, the position of the consulting room between inside and outside relates to its function as a transitional space between analyst and analysand, as does its typology as a closed space that is different from both inner and outer worlds, 'The consulting room [...] is different from the outside space, and it is different, from what we can imagine, from inner space. It has a specificity of its own' (Kohon 1999: 29).<sup>7</sup> In Green's work the setting is a 'homologue' for what he calls the third element in analysis, the 'analytic object', which is formed through the analytic association between analyst and analysand (Green 1975: 12), at the point of interaction between transference and counter-transference, which according to Green corresponds to Winnicott's definition of the transitional object located in the intermediate area of potential space—that of play.

## **Paratextuality**

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More than a boundary or a sealed border, the paratext is, rather, a *threshold*, or [...] a 'vestibule' that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back. It is an 'undefined zone' between the inside and the outside, a zone without any hard or fast boundary on either the inward side (turned toward the text) or the outward side (turned toward the world's discourse about the text), an edge [...]. (Genette 1997: 1–2).

*Uitzicht Op!:* *The public periscope* Uitzicht Op was originally installed for the Blue House in Amsterdam-IJburg in 2009. IJburg is a series of five islands currently being constructed in the East of Amsterdam, in its final state creating a link to Almere. The pioneer spirit of gaining land from the sea was accompanied by the aim to create a high standard of living, yet being based on a conventional urban design [...]. From 2005-9 this new urban development was accompanied by the Blue House, to which Jeanne van Heeswijk invited other artists and people from various professional backgrounds to deal with the complex issues of how to construct an urban living form from scratch in a huge new urban development, addressing the shortcomings and discrepancies between vision and reality. *transparadiso* focused on the consequences of urban planning, especially the

*promise of a view of the IJmer as one of the most significant assets of this new urban development and its geographical location. But for many residents this view was a temporary privilege, because the view continuously disappeared with the completion of IJburg [...]. The periscope was made publicly accessible by the owners of a private roof terrace, for the duration of the project.*

In the early pages of *Palimpsests* in 1982, Genette redefines transtextuality as the subject of poetics (Genette 1997: 1), and extends his system of transtextualities into a five-part schema: intertextuality—a relation of co-presence between two or more texts or (in Genette more literally than in Kristeva) the actual presence of one text within another, through, for example quotes, plagiarism, allusion; paratextuality—comprising those liminal devices and conventions, both within the book (peritext) and outside it (epitext), that mediate the book to the reader, for example, its title, subtitle, prefaces, postfaces, forewords, notes, blurbs, book covers, dust jackets; metatextuality—the transtextual relationship that links a commentary to ‘the text it comments upon (without necessarily citing it)’; hypertextuality—the superimposition of a later text on an earlier one, in other words, a relationship relating text b (hypertext) to an earlier text a (hypotext); and architextuality (or architexture) (Genette 1997: 1–7).

According to Richard Macksey, the ‘topology’ explored by Genette in *Paratexts* is one of the ‘borderland’, between the text and the ‘outside’ to which it relates (Macksey 1997: xiv-xv). For Macksey, Genette’s notion of the paratext is neither on the interior nor on the exterior, neither container or contained, but is an undecideable space: ‘it is on the threshold; and it is on this very site that we must study it, because essentially, *perhaps its being depends upon its site*’ (Macksey 1997: xvii).

## **Transformations**

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*Préposer*: to put somebody in a position to carry out a function by giving them the means or the authority to fulfil it. The term *préposé* in French may refer to an agent or clerk, and is commonly used to refer to a postman. When messengers are commissioned to transport messages through message-bearing systems, they require some means of transport: Hermes and the myriad angels travel on wings; the postman carries his bicycle—or is it the other way around? [...] *Préposés*: They don’t change in themselves, but they change everything around them, words, things and people (Serres 1995: 139, 140–146).<sup>8</sup>

*Deseo Urbano*: In *Valparaiso transparadiso* presented *deseo urbano*, an urban game, which used the dynamics of games like ‘trivial pursuit’. The public sites where the games were played (cafés, parks, restaurants, community centres) were announced in local papers, by postcards and posters. As well as these public events the game was played with the MINVU (Ministry for Housing and Urban Planning) of the 5<sup>th</sup> region of Chile. Playing the game with these diverse participants, their passion and active involvement allowed for a reconsideration of the conventional practice of urban design and opened up the possibilities of negotiation with the planning authorities. The players noted their wishes and desires on postcards, which were presented to Daniel Sepulveda, the director of



*the MINVU. The resulting questions and wishes served as a starting point for moving towards developing a diversified planning process.*

The figure of the angel features strongly in the intellectual project of Michel Serres. Truly transdisciplinary, Serres travels across science, literature, philosophy and art, constantly interrogating in the most poetic fashion, the nature of knowledge itself. In earlier texts this operates implicitly through the figure of the guide and the messenger. In the *Hermes* texts I–V (1969–80) the fascination is with information theory, transport and the multiplication of messages through diverse spaces of communication (Serres 1972, 1974, 1980, 1981, [1969] 1984). Later in *The Troubadour of Knowledge* (1991), in a discussion of the passage between the exact sciences and sciences of man, Serres refers to the importance of points of exchange and conditions of passage (Serres [1991] 1997). But in a more recent publication, *Angels: A Modern Myth*, his interest in angels is far more explicit. This text is a narrative, of sorts, set up as a conversation between two characters whose lives are based around an airport—one is a pilot, the other a doctor at the airport.

Serres' interest in angels concerns their threshold condition and occupation of a passage between. But although his work also highlights the angelic condition as temporal and spatial, his real emphasis is on communication, mediation and transformation as a result of exchange. Serres suggests that there are certain places where messages from angels increase in number and intensity; he calls these 'passing places of angels'; they are spaces of transition or interchange, such as airports, places of mass transit and new technologies. Serres emphasises the unstable nature of angels and their dual role as verbal messengers and elemental fluxes, but perhaps the most interesting thing Serres has to say about angels is that they are the personification of prepositions. Prepositions make connections between people, objects and places; some emphasise position, others focus on relations, and yet others, the directional nature of relations. Following Serres, it is possible to re-think the connections between objects, people and places in terms of transformation. Like prepositions, objects can suggest a number of different narratives about their histories and by indicating new future uses have the potential to change things around them. As gifts, in challenging capitalist notions of profit and ownership, objects also have an important role to play as mediators, bridging the private worlds of separate individuals. As toys, in encouraging play and speculation, animate objects mediate between real and imaginary, allowing for the invention of new possibilities and imaginary scenarios, often through games.

## **Paradox**

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I shall not first give a historical survey and show the development of my ideas from the theories of others, because my mind does not work that way. What happens is that I gather this and that, here and there, settle down to clinical experience, from my own theories and then last of all interest myself in looking to see where I stole what. Perhaps this is as good a method as any (Winnicott 1945: 137).

*Sites as Set: As one element of the larger project Sites as Set, The Magic Panorama with the sea as an empty centre visualises the tension between*

*enforced development and staged standstill, typical for tourist areas like Rovinj: the coastline, the horizon of the sea and its mythical borders—Rovinj and Muca—form a circle of a magic panorama. 3 dots, A, B, C (Hypermarket/ Supermarket/X-Change) set the coastline under tension: different speeds, as well as programmes of non-determined extension (CLOUDS), initiated on specific spots, generate a hyperactive beachzone, a dense parcours of enhanced use-value: together with PARA-SITE (zone for possible micro-economies) which contaminates the housing-area, the PARA-COURS builds those spaces of surplus value that undermine dominant developments without hindering their flux.*

One of the more serious failings of so-called public art has been to do precisely what Winnicott in the first quote above says that he cannot do: go directly from a to b—not ‘gathering’ this and that on the way and not trusting the process of ‘settling down’ to experience. Linear processes, which do not allow for the seemingly wasteful time of ‘gathering’ and ‘settling down’, have often produced public spaces and objects that approach problems rather directly with the aim of providing solutions and offering answers to questions. If there is such a practice as public art, and that in itself is debatable, then shouldn’t public art be engaged instead in the production of restless objects and spaces, ones that provoke us, that refuse to give up their meanings easily but instead demand that we question the very formation of the problems that we are presented with as givens?

A client’s brief is often driven by the need for an ‘application’, which might make it less usual for a designer to be encouraged to make a ‘problematic’ object or a design that critiques the context of an application and to take seriously the construction of critique as a reasonable design outcome. Indeed such an approach—to work against the aim of the brief, or to oppose the expressed desire of the client—might seem paradoxical if one is in the mind set of characterising design as the provision of an artefact made to ‘solve’ a problem. Yet, transparadiso’s practice suggests that by operating in a more critical mode, urban practitioners can create projects that put forward questions as the central tenet of the research, instead of (or sometimes as well as) solving or resolving problems, they expand the concept of the object from a singular artefact to a setting or situation that may of course include actual things, but more importantly through which it is possible to fundamentally rethink the parameters of the problem itself.

Here the role of the unrealised project becomes important. Competition entries provide important sites for working through ideas and concepts, and for questioning the parameters of a problem, and the institutions which frame and endorse such problems—in particular in architecture and planning.<sup>9</sup> There is a long history of architects producing their most innovative work as so-called paper architecture. Yet the relationship constructed between the imagined and real is far more complex than built and unbuilt, since some so-called paper projects hope to be built, while others set themselves up as unbuildable; as well as a third type which often uses normative representational codes, and appears to describe an intended physical construction, while in fact questioning the assumptions implicit in architectural discourse concerning what we consider appropriate and buildable. The sites of exhibition and publishing are therefore essential to the practice of urbanism in providing places to explore the critical and conceptual potential of architectural design and planning.

I have argued that such projects, which critically intervene in the sites into which they are inserted as well as the disciplinary procedures through which they operate, can be called 'critical spatial practice' (Rendell 2003: 221–233, 2006).<sup>10</sup> Drawing on the work of Michael de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre, I distinguish between those strategies that aim to maintain and reinforce existing social and spatial orders, and those tactics that seek to critique and question them. I extend the definition of the term 'critical', from Frankfurt School critical theory, to encompass practice—particularly those critical practices that involved self-reflection and the desire for social change: that seek to transform rather than to only describe (Rendell 2006).

The directness that the term intervention suggests might relate to the practice of 'direct urbanism', put forward by transparadiso as a third mode of urbanism, along with design and planning. Yet although transparadiso's way of working is direct in that it is a form of action on the ground, it is not a type of interruption or breakage; instead their practice is a point from which to start out, and so offers a sense of trajectory with an as-yet-undetermined potential. Not wishing to follow the most obvious and logically efficient route from A to B, transparadiso's 'desire lines' seek out and make time for the gathering of this and that, here and there, along the way, thus raising important issues concerning temporality for critical spatial practice.

Typically, critical interventions are considered to be short term, especially those that operate following the 'shock' principle of montage, where new insertions into existing sites produce immediate juxtapositions displacing dominant meanings and interrupting particular contexts, but the experience of an intervention might also be a pause from which one can draw out more subtle ambiguities over time. When instigated as part of the much longer process of urban design and planning, an apparently small situation might be taken up again, later, but in an alternative way in a new context, so connecting different temporalities—the short- and the long-term as well as all the times between—hinting at how a temporary intervention might—along the way—turn the present towards the future as well as the past.

Reflecting on the work of art-architecture, collaborative muf critic Kath Shonfield posed the following questions and observations:

How do you develop a city-wide strategy when you are fascinated by the detail of things? And how can you make something small-scale in the here and now if you are driven by the urge to formulate strategic proposals for the future? In a sense, this conundrum has always presented itself to the architect-planner [...] It is in this context that I want to start to look at some of the implications of muf's work that could be considered a possible paradigm for the operations of the architecture-planner [...] muf's work [...] develops the particular to the general and back to the particular [...]. It is expressed in the formula d/s = DETAIL/STRATEGY.

(Shonfield 2001: 14)

Shonfield's analysis of muf's working processes is absolutely spot-on, yet the tendency of the alternative urbanisms which emerged in the 1990s, especially in the UK where muf are located, was to frame such micro-macro interactions through the spatial turn, as my own term 'critical spatial practice' also indicates. However, it has become increasingly clear that the tactics and strategies—ambulant, instant, insurgent, DIY and direct—of this current phase of urbanism are highly sophisticated in their approach

to time. And this is where, or perhaps I should say when, *transparadiso* set the tone for a nuanced exploration of the temporality of urban interventions, the need for both the fleeting event and the patience born of waiting for that proposition which might occur in a far-distant future. *transparadiso*'s urban practice enjoys the reciprocity of micro and macro times—the moments and the mullings—and the opportunities they offer each other: where fleeting insights can be gathered, to return to Winnicott, to activate much slower evolutions, while within a long-term framework even a tiny incident can have resonance.

## ***Transversality***

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Transversality in the group is a dimension opposite and complementary to the structures that generate pyramidal hierarchisation and sterile ways of transmitting messages.

Transversality is the unconscious source of action in the group, going beyond the objective laws on which it is based, carrying the group's desire (Guattari [1964] 1984: 22).

*Lichtventilator, Resonanzboden, Vogerlbad: transparadiso were commissioned to develop a design for the extended corridor zone of the hospice in the concrete-lined trench planned for a biotope [...] A 'light fan' throws patches of light onto the floor that can be gradually altered by the individual control of the vanes as if sunlight were streaming through a canopy of leaves—and yet the object concerned is a lamp. The trench is filled with a slightly sunken Iroko parquet floor, and it is transformed into an echo chamber by bass shakers. Seating with an integrated stereo grows out of this, from where one can observe the birds in a specially conceived birdbath in the adjacent atrium. If one turns one's gaze back inside, a faint drawing is to be seen on the rear wall of the extended living room, showing the outlines of patches of light similar to those projected onto the floor.*

In both academic and arts-based contexts, the term interdisciplinarity is often used interchangeably with multidisciplinary, but I have argued that the two terms mean quite different things. In my view, multidisciplinary describes a way of working where a number of disciplines are present but maintain their own distinct identities and ways of doing things, whereas in interdisciplinarity individuals operate between, across and at the edge of their disciplines and in so doing question the ways in which they usually work (Rendell 2006). In exploring questions of method or process that discussions of interdisciplinarity inevitably bring to the fore, Julia Kristeva has argued for the construction of 'a diagonal axis', and noted that 'interdisciplinarity is always a site where expressions of resistance are latent' (Kristeva 1997: 5–6), while Homi Bhabha has also described interdisciplinarity in psychoanalytic terms as an 'ambivalent movement between pedagogical and performative address' (Bhabha 1994: 163).<sup>11</sup>

It is precisely because of the presence of unconscious processes that I am a passionate advocate of interdisciplinarity; for me interdisciplinary work is difficult, not only because it is critical, ethical and political, but also because it is emotional, and as such raises issues that are material and intellectual, but also psychic. In demanding

that we exchange what we know for what we do not know, and that we give up the safety of competence and specialism for the fear of inability and the associated dangers of failure, the transformational experience of interdisciplinary work produces a potentially destabilising engagement with existing power structures, allowing the emergence of fragile and uncertain forms of new and untested experience, knowledge, and understanding.

If interdisciplinarity is concerned with working between the gaps in order to question the edge of a discipline, transdisciplinarity is often described as a horizontal movement, concerned with moving across, transversally. Derived from the Latin preposition 'trans', meaning 'across, to or on the farther side of, beyond, over', the term can be used to give the sense of 'across, through, over, to or on the other side of, beyond, outside of, from one place, person, thing, or state to another'.<sup>12</sup> In Gary Genosko's excellent book on Félix Guattari, he describes how for Guattari, the interdisciplinarity (of 1968) was compromised; it relied too much on the disciplines between which it was located, and served to strengthen rather than question their dominance. For Guattari, it is transdisciplinarity that holds the potential of radical critique, related, in his own philosophy, to 'transversality [...] explicitly a creature of the middle' (Genosko 2002: 60), where the 'trans' is capable of transversal actions, which, in cutting across existing territories of knowledge, allows them to be experienced differently, thus providing new positions and perspectives.

Guattari, in his essay of 1964, 'The Transference', notes that 'in the transference there is virtually never any actual dual relation' (Guattari [1964] 1996: 63). He argues that dual relations are always triangular in character, noting that 'there is always in a real situation a mediating object that acts as an ambiguous support or medium' (Guattari [1964] 1996: 63). As Genosko notes, Guattari relies to a certain extent both on Winnicott's notion of the transitional object and potential space between mother and child as a third entity, but also Jacques Lacan's *object a*, as that which provokes the institution's desire. As Genosko puts it, for Guattari, 'it is with the triangle and threes that micropolitics begins' (Genosko 2003: 132). According to Genosko, a key early question for Guattari concerns what becomes of transference in the institutional setting of the hospital, and it is transversality which for him provides the possibility of critiquing the 'institutional context, its constraints, organisation, practices, etc., all those things and relations which normally exist in the background' (Genosko 2002: 71).

With transparadiso we have a practice which desires to transform and is itself transformative, hoping to transform—through engagement—the situations and subjects it encounters—but not leaving the challenging task of change to others, instead also seeking to continuously transform itself in response to its own processes and products, folding ongoing self-reflection and institutional critique into the process of making urban work. transparadiso is both transdisciplinary and transversal. Moving across art, architecture and urbanism, transparadiso call into question institutional structures and the ways in which they become manifest at the crossings between different disciplinary contexts, and rather than back away from a stoppage, they turn blockages into interesting opportunities and places for imaginative play.

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## **Paradise**

First there are the utopias. Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces. [...] There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilisation, real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society—which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, in contrast to utopias, heterotopias. I believe that between utopias and these quite other sites, these heterotopias, there might be a sort of mixed, joint experience, which would be the mirror. (Foucault 1967).<sup>13</sup>

*Stadt: Werk: Lehen: An association was founded in order to realise the backbone and parallel strategy of transparadiso's concept for this new quarter: to create an urban boulevard which will offer a public life not just for this housing area but also for the adjacent areas of public housing and the whole district of Salzburg-Lehen. Therefore a special concept was developed with subsidised ground floor areas dedicated to establish public uses along the boulevard as a mixture of NGOs and community uses (Volkshochschule/adult education centre, kindergarten, studio building, café, boulder centre) and cultural institutions (Gallery of the City of Salzburg and Fotohof Gallery). (See Figures 3 and 4)*

Figures 3 and 4: transparadiso, *Stadt: Werk: Lehen* (2006-11). Photographs: transparadiso.

For Michel Foucault, the sealed and self-contained world of the garden could be described as a 'heterotopia'—a place with a different ordering system. Yet unlike paradise, the 'no place' of the perfect world depicted by utopia, the unique logic of the garden also has a physical location. Paradise gardens have a spiritual rather than a pragmatic function—they are places removed from the everyday—sanctuaries often used for reflection. While the Japanese dry garden forms a symbolic analogue to nature, the rugs of the middle-east follow the sanctity of water in dry lands and depict walled gardens with dancing fountains at their centre, exemplified in the design of religious architectural complexes, such as those built in Seville, Granada and Córdoba. In the west we have tended to separate the productive use of irrigated land for farming and agriculture, from the contemplation of nature in its various romantic forms, the

untamed sublime of the wild and its domesticated and more comforting picturesque equivalent.

In some traditional separations of art and architecture, similar distinctions have been made, between architecture located on the side of the functional and productive, and art positioned in the place of the decorative and contemplative. Yet the work of transparadiso does not accept these divisions and normative ordering devices, instead they seek to produce projects that multiply the possibilities of exchange across the border between art and architecture, working on multiple scales from the single object and detail of one instance among many through to much more complex urban situations and unfolding developments. By placing the disciplines side by side and performing double and sometimes triple roles—as artist, architect, and client—transparadiso repeatedly change standpoints to ask, with the shift in attitude that comes from adopting an unexpected position, much more of a discipline that one would expect, as well as demanding that we face up to social issues, but not necessarily directly, sometimes instead making hidden things visible by playing situations at their own game.

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*Swinging*: A videowork by Barbara Holub provides me with a concluding motif, a figure or emblem, that occurs and then reoccurs through transparadiso's practice: a girl swings into and away from the camera, moving back and forth, now near, then far, but always, and forever, moving *across*.

## **Acknowledgements**

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This essay was first published in Transparadiso's practice monograph: Rendell, Jane (2013), 'Writing Transparadiso: Across and Beside', Transparadiso, *Direct Urbanism*, Nürnberg: Verlag für moderne Kunst. (German/English). Many thanks to Transparadiso and to Verlag für moderne Kunst for allowing it to be republished in this collection.

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## Notes

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1. All quotes in italics come from the words of transparadiso themselves, and previously published or included in unpublished but written project descriptions.

2. Winnicott, D.W. (1967) 'The Location of Cultural Experience', *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 48, pp. 368–72, pp. 371–2. Republished in Winnicott, D.W. (1991) *Playing and Reality* London: Routledge.
3. The British School of Psychoanalysis consists of psychoanalysts belonging to the British Psycho-Analytical Society; within this society are three groups, the Kleinian Group, the 'B' Group (followers of Anna Freud) and the Independent Group.
4. Klein describes the early stages of childhood development in terms of different 'positions'. The paranoid schizophrenic position characterises the child's state of one-ness with the mother, where he or she relates to part-objects such as the mother's breast, as either good or bad, satisfying or frustrating. See Klein, Melanie (1988), 'Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms', *Envy and Gratitude and Other Worlds 1946–1963*, London: Virago, pp. 1–24. (First published 1946). This position is replaced by a depressive stage where in recognising its own identity and that of the mother as a whole person, the child feels guilty for the previous aggression inflicted on the mother. See Klein, Melanie (1981), *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works 1921–1945*, London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis.
5. The French term used is 'baquet' (Laplanche 1999: 226, note).
6. The French word used is 'écriin'. (Green 2005: 33 note).
7. 'Dialogues with Andre Green', in Kohon, 1999 p. 29.
8. Serres refers to Jacques Tati (1908-82), *Jour de Fete*, on p. 139, and then pp. 140–6.
9. See, for example, Hill, Jonathan (1998), *The Illegal Architect*, London: Black Dog Publishing.
10. I first introduced the term 'critical spatial practice' in my article Rendell, Jane (2003), 'A Place Between Art, Architecture and Critical Theory', *Proceedings to Place and Location*, Tallinn, Estonia, pp. 221–33 and later consolidated and developed the concept in my book Rendell, Jane (2006), *Art and Architecture: A Place Between*, London: IB Tauris. Since that time, the same term has been taken up by individuals such as Judith Rugg in her seminars at the RIBA, London, from around 2008; Eyal Weisman to describe activities as part of the 'MA: Research Architecture' at Goldsmiths College of Art, London; and most recently by Marcus Miessen to identify the 'MA: Architecture and Critical Spatial Practice' launched in 2011 at the Städelschule, Frankfurt.
11. In an interview with English and art historian W.J.T. Mitchell, cultural critic Homi Bhabha discusses the operation of two different forms of interdisciplinarity in academic institutions over the past thirty to forty years. The first, which he names 'Interdisciplinarity 1', assumes that different disciplines have 'foundational truths', but that by putting 'two foundations in proximity' a 'wider base' can be created. Bhabha believes the institutions are quite comfortable with Interdisciplinarity 1, but that there is another interdisciplinary mode, which he calls 'Interdisciplinarity 2'. For Bhabha, 'Interdisciplinarity 2 is not an attempt to strengthen one foundation by drawing from another; it is a reaction to the fact that we are living at the real border of our own disciplines, where some of the fundamental ideas of our discipline are being profoundly shaken'. In his view, 'questions to do with the indeterminate, with contingency, with intertextuality, have become central the issue of ambivalence too', and that this is 'because Interdisciplinarity 2 is fired with a desire to understand more fully, and more problematically, that it's posed at the point of our disciplines' liminality' (Mitchell 1995).
12. < <http://oed.com/view/Entry/204575?rskey=0uUZXL&result=2 - eid> > and <<http://oed.com/view/Entry/204575?rskey=KjaYsa&result=2&isAdvanced=false - eid>>. Accessed 1 June 2012.
13. This text, entitled 'Des Espace Autres' and published by the French journal *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité* in October, 1984, was the basis of a lecture given by Michel Foucault in March 1967. Translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec.< [http://www.opa-a2a.org/dissensus/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/foucault\\_michel\\_des\\_spaces\\_autres.pdf](http://www.opa-a2a.org/dissensus/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/foucault_michel_des_spaces_autres.pdf) >. Accessed 30 May 2012.

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