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The 16th Conference of the International Forum on Urbanism (IFoU)

12-14 December 2024

INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON URBANISM

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND NEW ZEALAND

EPFL

TU Delft Delft University of Technology

The proceedings of the Proceedings of the 16th Conference of the International Forum on Urbanism (IFoU) have been prepared by:

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Proceedings of the 16th Conference of the International Forum on Urbanism (IFoU)

12-14 December 2024

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NTU Taipei

EPFL Lausanne

University of Buenos Aires

Chinese University of Hong Kong

University of Auckland - Waipapa Taumata Rau

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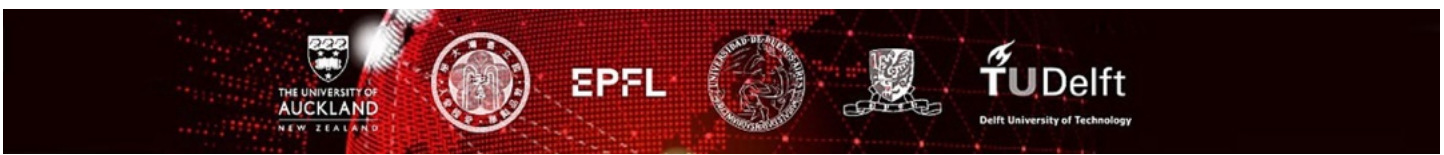
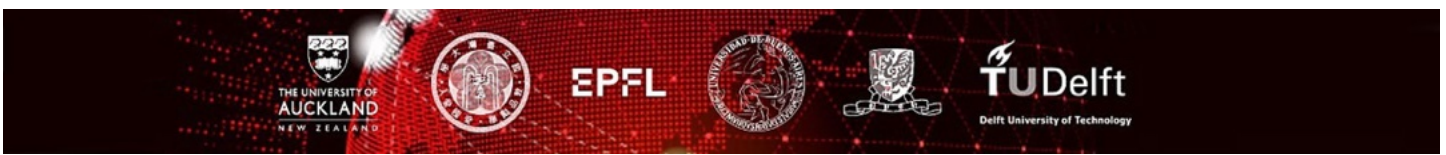


The 16th conference of the International Forum on Urbanism (IFoU) took place from 12 to 14 December 2024.

This publication includes the papers accepted for the 16th IFoU Conference, which was organized as a collective event by six member institutions of IFoU: National Taiwan University, EPFL Lausanne, University of Buenos Aires, Chinese University of Hong Kong, The University of Auckland – Waipapa Taumata Rau, and Delft University of Technology. Under the general theme, Urbanism of Hope, each participating institution became the host for one sub-theme presented online during the conference. In this way, following the presentations of the different sub-themes from host to host, it became a virtual tour around the world.



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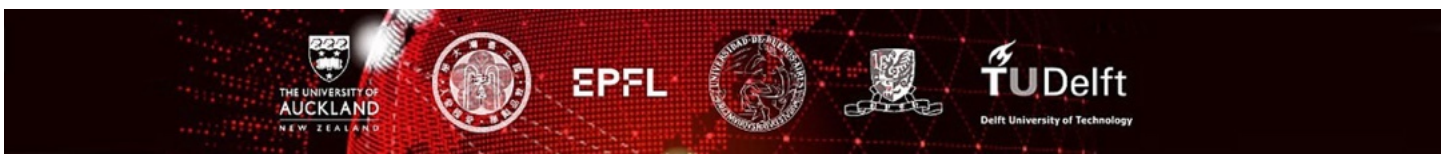

Preface

In the midst of a structural crisis worldwide that is characterized by natural disasters, growing social and economic tensions as well as increasing political, even military conflicts the focus of 16th conference of IFoU is on attempts, approaches and solutions on local level: to what extent initiatives on local level are able to combat or to reduce the impact of environmental disasters, to improve local resiliency, to stimulate the local economy and social integration, to bridge political contradictions and to overcome fragmentation, segregation and separation? In this framework planning approaches and design concepts are discussed under the following themes and related experiences from local governments, NGO's, CBO's, local resident movements, and initiatives for the local economy: Connectivity and Accessibility in the Age of Mediated Relational Mobility, Governmentality and Local Participation, Local Resiliency – Crisis and Catastrophes as Laboratories of Local/Global Innovation, Adaption and Socio-Ecological Change, Spaces for Local Economy, Spaces of Integration – Living Together

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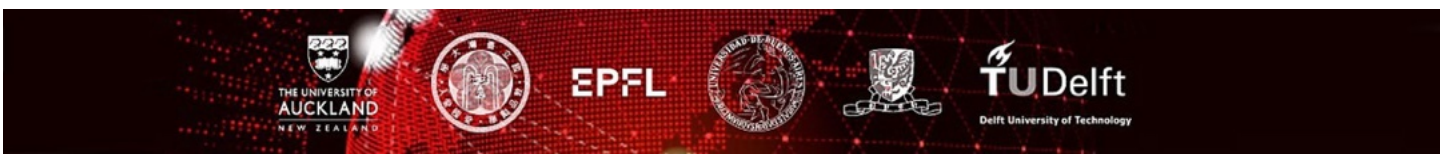

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Patrick Bouchain

Patrick Bouchain (1945) is a French architect and scenographer known for integrating political activism into his architectural projects. His work is characterized by a commitment to social engagement and public participation, where architecture becomes a means of empowering communities and challenging traditional power structures. Bouchain's projects frequently address societal issues, placing the users and their needs at the centre of the design process, while also questioning the norms of urban planning and architectural practice. Bouchain has worked to democratize architecture throughout his career by opening up the process to public involvement, often collaborating with artists, activists, and local communities. His designs emphasize flexibility, adaptability, and the reappropriation of space by its users, making architecture a political act in itself. Among his most important works, the transformation of Le Lieu Unique in Nantes, the revitalization of La Condition Publique in Roubaix, and his influential book Construire Autrement exemplify Patrick Bouchain's innovative approach to architecture and social engagement.

Host: EPFL Lausanne

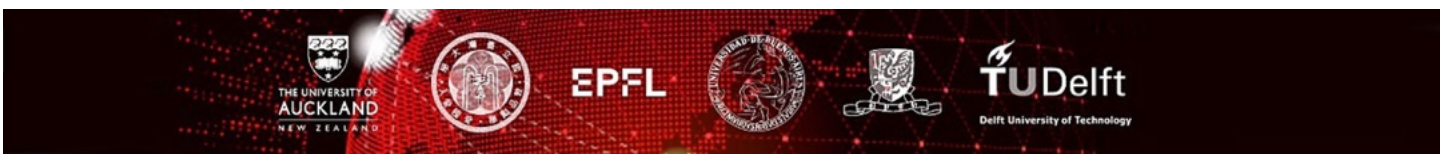
Deidre Brown

Professor Deidre Brown is a member of the Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Kahu tribes of the Far North of New Zealand. She teaches Indigenous design and architectural history at the Te Pare School of Architecture, The University of Auckland Waipapa Taumata Rau. Deidre is Codirector of the MĀPIHI: Māori and Pacific Housing Research Centre, a university-level research centre committed to increasing the quality and supply of housing for Māori and Pacific peoples and comprised of 20 Māori and Pacific academic staff researchers and 14 aligned PhD students. She has written several books about architecture and art, including the multi-authored Art in Oceania: A new history (2012) and Māori Architecture (2009), and curated exhibitions in galleries around the country. Her latest book Toi Te Mana: An Indigenous History of Māori Art (November 2024), coauthored with Associate Professor Ngarino Ellis, is the outcome of a 12 year research project. Deidre has belonged to boards of governance for arts organisations such as Objectspace, The Physics Room and the Christchurch Arts Centre and is a former governor of the Arts Foundation of New Zealand. She is a fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand Te Apārangi and Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects, and was this year awarded the New Zealand Institute of Architects' highest honour, the Gold Medal, for her services to Māori architecture

Host: Chinese University of Hong Kong / The University of Auckland - Waipapa Taumata Rau

Cynthia Goytia

Professor Cynthia Goytia is one of the leading urban economics academics in Latin America. Head of the MSc. in Urban Economics at Torcuato Di Tella University in Buenos Aires, Argentina, she chairs the Urban Policy and Housing Research Center (CIPUV), two prominent institutions devoted to teaching and researching urban policies and housing. She is David Rockefeller Visiting Scholar at Harvard University and has also lectured at the University of Cambridge, London School of Economics, in the UK, UCLA, UC Berkeley and University of Southern California, and the Institute of Housing Studies, in the Netherlands. She has developed a relevant and influential body of academic research on urban policies, housing, land markets, and their regulation, with a particular focus on inequalities, that is contributing to informing urban policies in developing countries. She publishes in specialized publications and books, some of them recently released in Chinese. As a senior consultant, she works for Argentina and other Latin American governments,



and for multilateral organizations, including the World Bank, United Nations, Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), and CAF (Banca de Desarrollo de America Latina). She is a fellow of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. She holds an M.Sc. in Urban Economics and a Ph.D. from the London School of Economics and Political Science, in the UK.

Host: University of Buenos Aires

Tseng Shu-Cheng

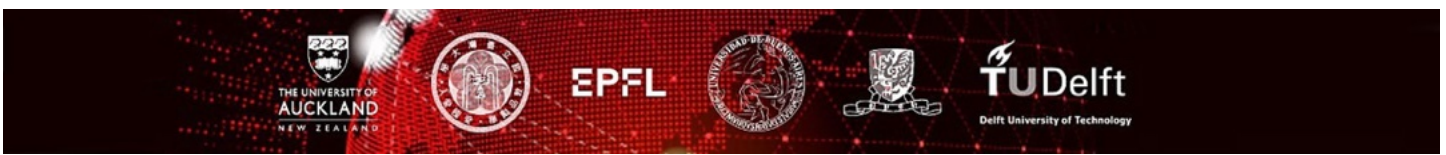
Born in 1961 in Hsiaying Rural Township of Tainan County, he graduated from Cheng Kung University's Department of Architecture, obtained a master's degree from Tunghai University's Department of Architecture, and earned his doctorate from National Taiwan University's Graduate Institute of Civil Engineering. He held academic positions, including as an associate professor at Tamkang University's Department of Architecture, and administrative roles like OURs' chairman, Community Empowerment Society's director, and Republic of China Community Building Association's president. He also served in politics and government as Tainan County's deputy governor, Tainan City's deputy mayor, and the National Development Council's vice chairman. Currently, he teaches architectural theory and community design at Tainan National University of the Arts. He's actively involved in the GuKeng International Spiritual Ecology Village's construction, showcasing his dedication to sustainable community projects.

Host: National Taiwan University

Maaike Zwart

Maaike Zwart is the alderman for the Municipality of Delft for Sustainability, Work and Income and Economy. Her responsibilities include Energy Transition and Circularity, Work and Income, Economy, Delft Southeast, Innovation District, Redevelopment of Schieoevers District, Events, Tourism and City Marketing, Innovation and Field Labs, and International Policy. Maaike Zwart was trained as an urbanist at Delft University of Technology. After studies, she has worked for multiple institutions in economics, urban development, and water management. For example, while working at Ecorys, she worked on urban development, regional development and water challenges in the Netherlands, the EU and the world, helping public authorities with spatial and economic advice. Before working for the Delft municipality, she worked for the Municipality of Amsterdam as coordinator of the city-wide program 'Make Space for the City', program manager and team leader in sustainable area development.

Host: Delft University of Technology



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Connectivity and Accessibility in the Age of Mediated Relational Mobility

Urban Disruptions as Laboratories for Innovation Some Explorations in Rome

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Abstract: Urban disruption permeates our everyday experience, whether we are travelling across the planetary urban space or listening to the often sensationalist media reports of the day's events. Disruption is boredom, sometimes catastrophe, a violent, unexpected event, an unintended, rarely desired transformation. It is the result of the tangle of forces in the world we live in, to which we add extra forces. It is, we might say, a sign of the vitality of the world and its endless transformation. In this paper we propose Rotturaforma's point of view, that is, to see urban disruption as a unique potential for the urbanistic project of transition, a discontinuity with which to work through a deep understanding of the forces at work and a difficult, unpredictable effort to reweave, to rewrite the relationship with these same forces. Alongside the practices of prompt repair and replacement that characterise the problem-solving project, Rotturaforma flanks (perhaps opposes) other, less obvious directions of work, such as the inhabitation of disruption or the transformative repair. In short, projects that integrate actions that do not try to hide or deny the forces, but rather attempt to inhabit them or bend them into forms of reciprocity, exchange and continuous learning. Interpreted in this way, urban disruption seems capable of becoming an urban laboratory for innovation. But there is no shortage of technical limitations and cultural resistance, perhaps the same resistance that opposes the ecological transition.

Keywords: Disruption, innovation, translocalism, synchronisation

1. Rotturaforma

Every urban situation is punctuated by disruptions, at any time. Sooner or later, a water pipe bursts, a roadside collapses, an electrical box breaks, a storm drain fails. Disruptions bring with them a boredom that continually and pervasively undermines the normalised use of space: each time they occur, the way we live is turned upside down; however small the temporal and spatial scale of the event.

The reason is banal. Compared to the choices of transformation that we impose on the territory every day, such as cancellation, persistence and permanence (Secchi, 2000), urban disruption appears as an accident. Usually it is not a choice, but something that happens unexpectedly, independently of our will; it is unwanted. It is therefore common that the transformation advocated by disruption does not have the dignity of subsistence. Its transformation must disappear, what is disrupted must either be promptly repaired or replaced.

However, urban disruption is perhaps the ultimate in innovation. Boring as it may be, urban disruption is a discontinuity, an unplanned time.[15] It is subversive and potentially

[15] According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2023), disruption is "a situation in which it is difficult for something to continue in the normal way; the act of stopping something from continuing in the

transformative: the complex system of established relationships breaks down and a time of suspension comes into view. Is this unwanted change not assonant with the transformations manifested in the disruptions and bad weather we are constantly hearing about as a result of climate change? Isn't this the same change to which we should tune our urban configurations and train our practices?

Stephen Graham (2011) would argue that what in urban space is broken, or literally collapsed, is a heuristic device that reveals the often invisible, massive complexes of contemporary energy, communication, transport and water. Disturbing as it is, disruption seems to be the closest we can come to knowing from the inside what we generally associate with an inscrutable and predictable technological apparatus. For Graham, disruption is literally a window into the circuits that underpin our modern lives and our relationship to the things we live with. Graham and Thrift (2007) recall Martin Heidegger's adage of "ready-to-hand" to remind us that the world is made "manageable" by tools, such as infrastructure, that remain predominantly transparent. These tools only come into focus as things when they become unusable—when they break or malfunction. The moment they come into focus, they become opaque. Instead of escaping our attention, the tool suddenly imposes itself on us (Graham & Thrift, 2007, quoting Verbeek, 2004). As Goffman (1959) puts it, the "backstage" of the built environment momentarily becomes "frontstage" (Henke, 2000). The black box of impenetrable, unpredictable and invisible infrastructures gets unpacked (Graham & Thrift, 2007, 8).

This contribution aims to draw attention to urban disruption as an opportunity for the *transition to action* advocated by Bloch's (1986) principle of hope. Through its sometimes dramatic upheaval and revelation, urban disruption moves us to action, to care and, more broadly, to seek a new relationship with the world. The rupture that urban disruption brings produces learning, adaptation and improvisation. According to Petroski (2006), disruption and failure are the very means by which societies learn and learn how to re-produce. When something breaks down in urban space, it uncovers not only the world's tangle of fragility, but also the forces pressing on urban organisations. The disturbances and tensions, which are often profound and linked to extended, hidden or not immediately intelligible geographies, are now easier to trace. Disruption goes straight to the heart of the interdependencies of the urban condition. Possibilities for knowledge are unlocked and the way is paved with opportunities to rethink the relationships between things (human and non-human, living and non-living). But these are not easy steps. Rather, they require a deeper engagement with the same forces that have manifested themselves in destruction. In this contribution we argue that urban disruption, a dark intermittence in which a new clarity is latent, is also a potent opportunity for the urban project. More specifically, we argue that automatisms in the procedures of technological repair and replacement that occur in response to urban disruption should be questioned insofar as they may constitute a limit to the possibility of action and relationality with the world and its agentivities.

Faced with a crisis or the risk of a crisis, it is certainly nothing new to examine the results of a disaster, to question the causes, to interpret them and to relate them to the organisational principles designed to respond to the crisis and its risk. On the one hand, however, the diagnoses are usually almost immediately directed at restoring the status quo or, in a more reformist vein, at replacing the broken with better-performing works and organisations. In both cases, the result is resistance to random change and its effects, its obliteration. In the first case (*prompt repair*), the transformation that has inadvertently undermined the configurations, the very practices and conditions of comfort that these configurations guaranteed, is resisted and work is done to restore the previous settings. In the second case (*replacement*), the resistance to change is certainly less obvious, since part of the change is realised, it is exposed. Nevertheless, replacement undoes the accidental transformation by substituting the destroyed apparatuses with the same or more efficient ones that do not necessarily have a greater dialectical relationship with the causes of the rupture or whose externalities do not concern the crisis or the endangered context. On the other hand, diagnoses tend to be made in the immediate aftermath or after major crises, and there is a tendency to ignore the constant signs of impending rupture that affect the material deposit of territories on a daily basis. Instead, it is argued here that everyday cracks and ruptures can be revealing. It is in these directions (repair, substitution, neglect) that the dominant solutionist urban project is oriented and which we want to question instead.

Rotturaforma, the perspective we want to share, is rather a proposal for the urban project to engage in a continuous and profound dialectical exercise with urban disruption

normal way."

and its forces, an exercise that corresponds to the training of the project for change (Ranzato & Metta, 2025). We share the idea that in today's unstable conjuncture affecting the planet and its worlds, the common challenge is to stand in the change, interpreting it as a goal and not only as a conduit (Haraway, 2016). Rotturaforma embraces the transition paradigm—the tension for continuous change—that replaces the solution paradigm typical of modernity (ibid).

Rotturaforma, on the one hand, is proposed as a continuous attention in the project to the causes, the forces, the reasons for the rupture, both in the case of collapse and in the case of smaller disturbances. The Rotturaforma project becomes, first and foremost, a twisting operation on the causes, the reasons, the agendas that drove the deformation to rupture. Entering into the rupture and its underlying agendas implies for the project the adoption of a translocal gaze that moves from the effects of the rupture to the local and supra-local forces that the event signifies.

Rotturaforma, on the other hand, acknowledges the fatigue and time that such attention entails, the power, the beauty, but also the ruthlessness and potential violence that this operation of synchronisation with the forces that generate rupture implies for the project and for the practices that the project supports. From this perspective, the project is therefore primarily concerned with the accidental transformation that rupture entails. What are the possibilities of inhabiting rupture, of living with it? The project then develops ways of working that can also be non-obvious alternatives to repair and repair through technological replacement. Different paths open up, ranging from strategic repair to abandonment and amplification of the disruption.

To witness the hope for dynamic trust that urban disruption brings to the urban project, we look to Rome (Italy), a metropolis that is also an immense repository of broken and crumbling things, both because of lack of maintenance and because of the powerful agencies that operate in this territory. Here, some emblematic urban disruptions are understood in terms of their consequences, the agencies behind the collapse are explored, and finally, "spatial reconfigurations of hope" are proposed that engage directly with the agencies behind the disruption and concretely change the state of things. In the projects of Rotturaforma, the time horizon is distorted: the configurations of space function as laboratories of innovation, synchronised with the historical and the predictions of the perturbing agencies, and open up to the metastable.

2. Inhabitation of disruption and transformative repair

Given the state of permanent crisis in which we live, repair is a key issue and a matter of interest to a wide range community. But it is precisely because disruption, as a result of disaster, inadequacy, obsolescence and man-made accidents, is a kind of permanent risk to the systems that sustain the urban way of life, that it is necessary to question repair procedures. The same goes for replacement, the other major response we give to disruption. Are repair and replacement truly transformative? Do they also repair the relationships that involve the forces implicated in the disruption?

The "problem-solving" attitude of replacement and, sometimes, repair, optimises system efficiency and speeds up response times at the expense of other aspects: local and collective intelligence, spiritual aspects, use and preservation of existing materials, nonhuman agency. The perpetual state of crisis associated with climate change highlights the interconnectedness of humans, animals, plants and the geophysical world, as well as the entanglement of ecosystems, histories, technologies, institutions, and cultures (Chakrabarty, 2009; Ghelfi & Papadopoulos, 2022; Kingsland, 2005). Within this framework, the modus operandi of technological solutionism shows all its limitations.

The operations to be undertaken could be different from those that revolve around the idea of control. The recognition and the awakening of "inanimate" forces of destructive power confront us with a multitude of events over which we can no longer exercise control. The ontological revolution resulting from crises (Haraway, 2016; Latour, 2017; Stengers, 2015) insists on the paradigm of ecological transition, which leads to a reversal of our practices. This new awareness compels us to interpret ruptures no longer as problems (Graham, 2011) but as openings, that is, as new opportunities to re-establish bonds with activities, to reconnect with the world. The work to be done is to find a possible synchronisation between agents and different spatial conditions. But how? Here we propose two main directions of work, the first is the *inhibition of the disruption* and the second is *transformative repair*.

The *inhabitation of disruption* is about going along with the tumultuous movement and upheaval that disruption generates. There is no longer a need to repair the broken object, but rather to acknowledge the transformative potential of the agentivities that have taken over.

Arsenal Oasis by Ruderal Studio (2020) is an example of this way of relating to space and its possible failures. This experimental project deals with a found broken object: a leaking pipe whose water becomes the source of a new oasis. A 70-hectare area of the Arsenal—the place where the pipe collapsed—is transformed into a common ground for testing methods and mechanisms to compensate for the loss of public open space in the city of Tbilisi (Georgia). By channelling the accidental surplus of water through a series of manmade "interventions," the dry wasteland is transformed into an emergent wetland. Ruderal Studio defines intervention as the act of working with systems rather than bounded geometries. This requires an active engagement with verbs such as building, diverting, removing and amplifying.

Open to the unpredictability of transformations, the project of inhabitation of disruption does not necessarily require geometric rigor, but the identification of actions to strengthen the relationship with the forces (destroying a concrete platform, opening a gap, occupying a space, and more) opening up to a process of continuous metamorphosis. The ultimate goal is not to restore a state of equilibrium regulated by technological solutions, nor to repair behaviour; on the contrary, one opens space to the metastable, to a constant tension of negotiation between forces.

Transformative repair does not counteract the disruption but interacts with the forces that produce it to bend their effects. It therefore involves rethinking the relationships between forces and the space in which they operate. The difference with the inhabitation of disruption is that in this case the broken object is indeed repaired but through a series of actions that involve bending the forces in one's favour by transforming the spatial settings. The spatial transformations, and the practices that the space makes possible, are such that the rupture can always be re-manifested and even produce new transformations. It is therefore a question of preparing the space—and the behaviours—for the coexistence of multiple agents and of breaking the rigidity of the space.

The well-known Room for the River project (2006–2015) in the Netherlands is a good example. This regional project of transformative repair was a response to the annual flooding of the Rhine delta, exacerbated by climate change and other modifications in the wider river basin. The severe floods of 1993 and 1995, which led to the evacuation of more than 200,000 people, highlighted the need for more space in the rivers. The objectives of this programme were to accommodate a flow of 16.000m^3/s in the branches of the Rhine and at the same time to improve the spatial quality of the river region (Room for The River, n.d.). Instead of relying on a vertical technological system of water control, the project expanded horizontally, through floodplains, to give the river more space, reducing water levels and flood risk. This approach looked at forces such as the power of wind, water, sediment and vegetation to make adaptable, multifunctional spaces for flood management, biodiversity development, and recreation. As well as harnessing Gaia's forces, the design of this project required a new way of organising people: an adaptive governance, continuous monitoring, stakeholder participation, and flexible decision making to respond to unpredictable environmental and climate change over time.

Transformative repair therefore implies an adaptive approach that is directly related to the unpredictability of the re-manifestation of forces. It means being open to a variety of scenarios in which forces and the effects of their actions are arranged in space according to different (but somehow predicted) dispositions.

3. Chasm in Tor de Schiavi and construction site in Pietralata

As said, Rotturaforma offers an unorthodox perspective on urban disruptions, viewing them not merely as incidents or obstacles, but as catalysts for reimagining urban space and fostering community engagement. Moving beyond traditional solutions of quick repair or technological replacement, Rotturaforma promotes a dialectical relationship with the city's structural fragilities. This perspective recognizes that the forces behind urban disruptions are rarely isolated events; rather, they arise from complex, interconnected dynamics that operate at local and translocal levels. Embracing this complexity, and moving beyond conventional repair solutions, this approach calls for speculative thinking at the territorial scale, envisioning socio-spatial configurations that might inhabit, induce, simulate, or even amplify these disruptions.

This methodology opens pathways for innovative explorations in urban regeneration, inviting a consideration of disruptions not only as physical events but as catalysts with long-term social, economic, and political implications that extend beyond their immediate context. Two case studies, both in the eastern part of Rome, exemplify how this approach can turn the limitations and failures of the city into new opportunities for urban regeneration: the chasm in via Tor de Schiavi and the construction sites of Pietralata.

In via Tor de Schiavi, the disruption manifests as a large chasm opened in 2021—and there for years—within the courtyard of a public housing complex in Rome's eastern suburbs,

marked by structural degradation due to decades of under-maintenance and a chronic lack of resources for public housing management. The emergence of the chasm offered a unique occasion to reveal and systematically map a vast network of subterranean caves extending beneath much of Rome's urban surface. At the same time the chasm, left largely unaddressed and bordered by temporary fencing, has become a symbol of ongoing instability, impacting residents' daily lives by highlighting the fragility of the built environment and the public infrastructure.

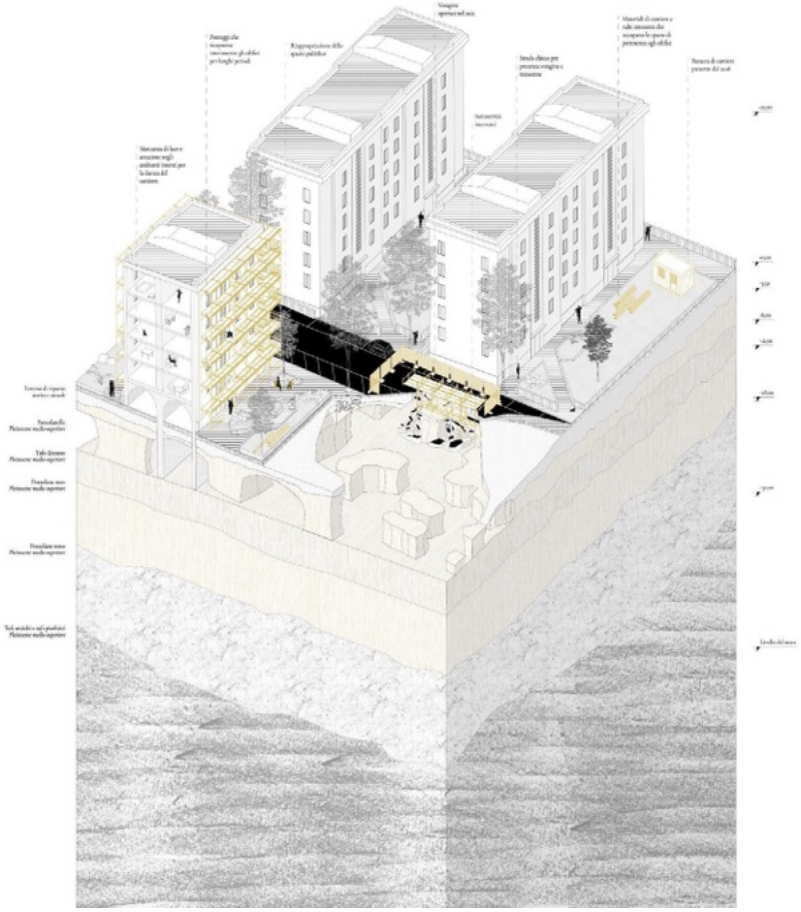

Figure 1. Chasm in Tor de Schiavi. (Credits: Federico Marchese, Emilia Nardella, Sofia Nicoletti Altimari, Mara Fathi, 2023)

This disruption is not merely the result of natural or geological factors; rather, it reflects a combination of environmental and anthropogenic forces. Environmental degradation, the continuous passage of automotive traffic and Rome's precarious geological underpinnings (e.g., ancient quarries, unstable soil) have all contributed to this rupture. Alongside this, inadequate public investment and economic challenges affecting the city's peripheries contribute to the chasm's significance, making it more than an isolated incident but a systemic, multi-layered problem.

Rotturaforma proposes to address this chasm not merely as a problem to be fixed, but as a space to be inhabited and transformed. Instead of simply filling the hole to restore surface continuity, the exploration incorporates various strategies: it envisions leveraging the chasm to open an accessible pathway into the subterranean network, enabling exploration and study of the cave system; it reimagines the underground space as a public realm, relocating certain functions currently situated above ground; and it proposes easing traffic in specific public areas to reduce the burden of automobile congestion on the surface. By avoiding a purely functional solution, the project seeks to engage with and expose the underlying tensions that contributed to the collapse, fostering a design approach that considers the scale and interconnectedness of these forces.

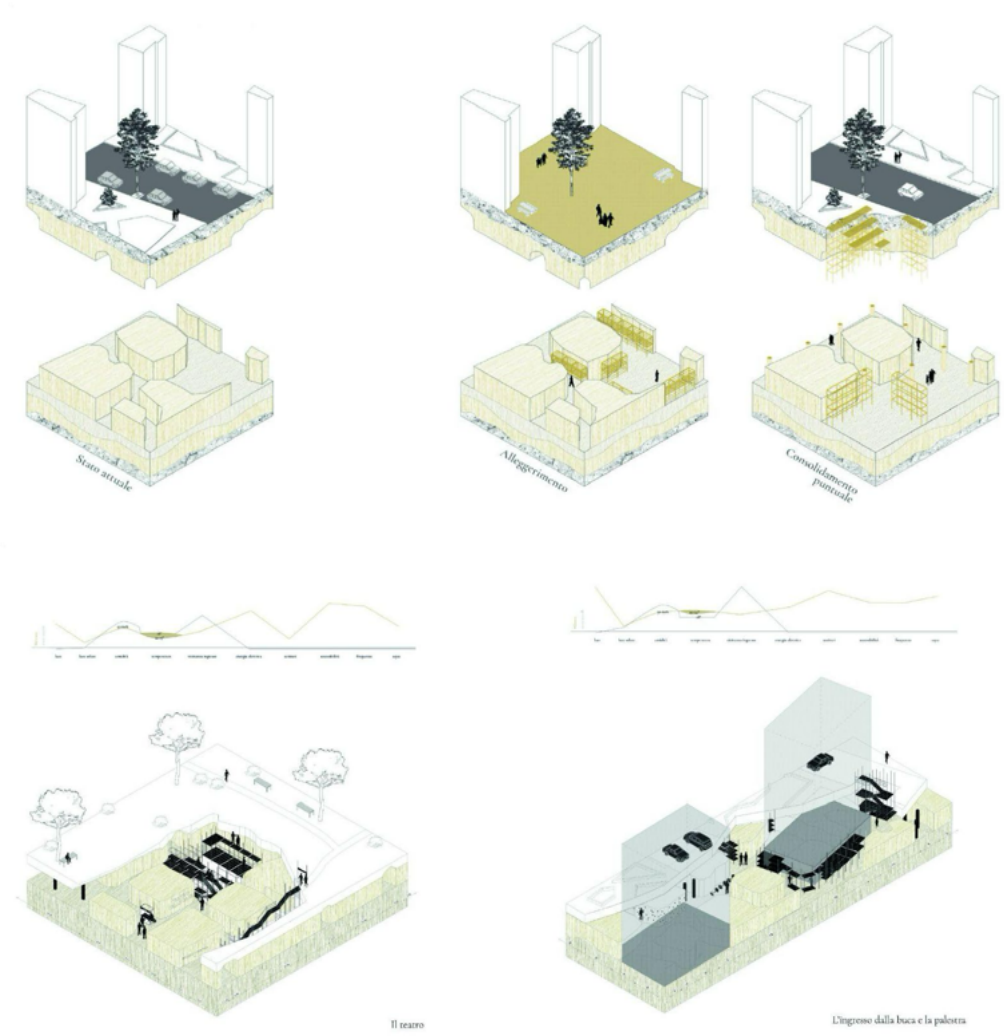

Figure 2. Design strategies. (Credits: Federico Marchese, Emilia Nardella, Sofia Nicoletti Altimari, Mara Fathi, 2023)

However, the inhabitation of the disruption also presents significant challenges: many residents prioritize prompt repair, perceiving the chasm as a sign of institutional neglect rather than an opportunity for regeneration. Additionally, the temporary nature of some Rotturaforma interventions may not fully meet the stability and security that residents demand, raising questions about the long-term viability of such initiatives. Nonetheless, the case of via Tor de Schiavi illustrates the potential of Rotturaforma's dialogic approach to transform disruptions into opportunities for collective reflection and the possibility of freely using spaces, albeit requiring a delicate balance between innovation and expectations of local inhabitants.

The disruption in Pietralata reveals another pathway of the Rotturaforma approach. This area of Rome, stretching between the Aniene river, via Nomentana and via Tiburtina, has suffered from decades of suspended construction projects, many of which were abandoned as part of the failed Sistema Direzionale Orientale (SDO) plan. Intended to serve as a government hub, the SDO project was never completed, leaving Pietralata strewn with abandoned sites and fenced-off areas that sever the neighborhood from the rest of the city. These "grey zones", which lack basic services, have become symbols of speculative development without regard for community needs. This pile of permanent work sites, unfinished facilities and infrastructures, as well as the round of projects (e.g., the new A.S. Roma stadium), political and entrepreneurial discourses and projections, form a cauldron, a vast territorial disruption. The forces at play are thus predominantly anthropic: continuous conflicting visions and actions, a kind of repeated spatial stalemate.

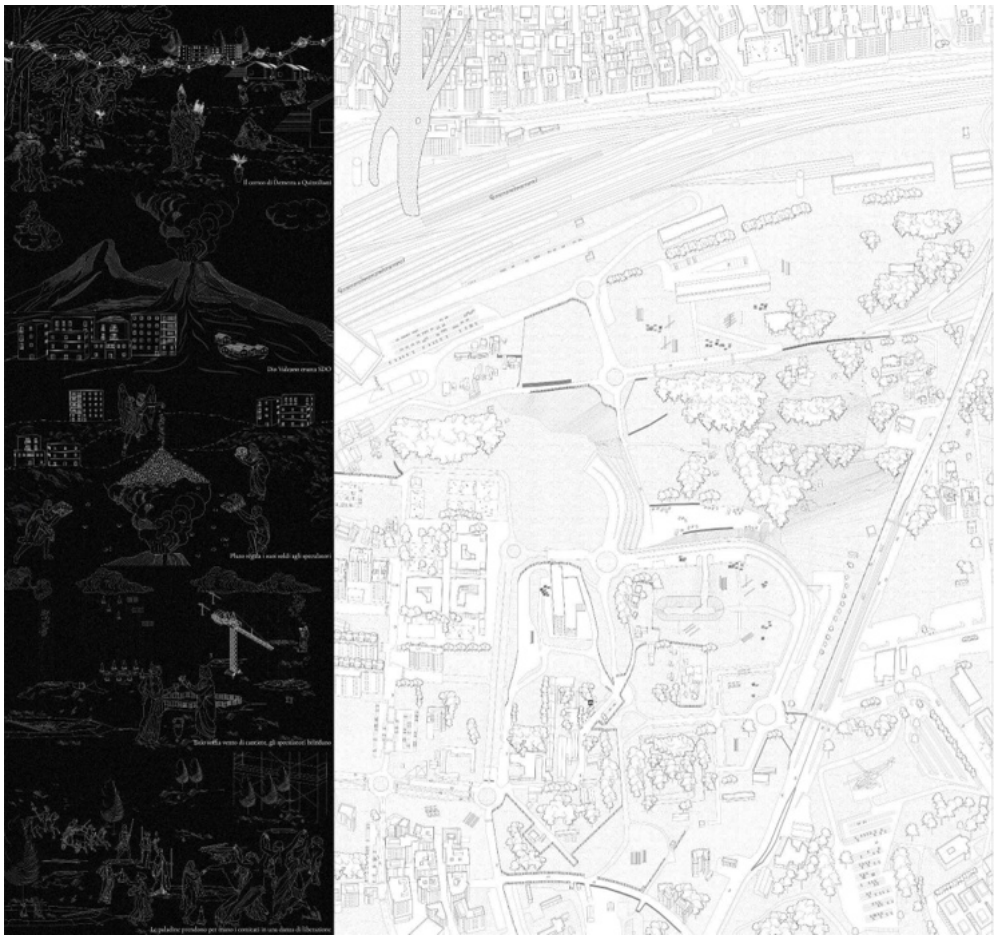

Figure 3. 'Magma' (forces) and actants in Pietralata. (credits: Elisa Bacilieri, Silvia Farano, Barbara Judith Salzano, Justine Hesse, 2024)

Rotturaforma's strategy for Pietralata proposes a long-term but still temporary, flexible adaptation of these metastable spaces always in the middle and on the verge of transformation. Rotturaforma interprets the vast territory of Pietralata as a field of continuous urban experimentation, preserving the existing complex topology of excavated areas, hills Roman "agro"; building sites that have inappropriately become private gardens or temporary parks, some of them open to the public and managed by private individuals; major traffic routes; and imposing and introverted complexes (such as the Sandro Pertini Hospital). It is a field in which the most diverse intentions (and forces) of politicians, entrepreneurs and inhabitants are spatialised in ever new forms of interpretation and possibilities of land use. Forces are bent to become continuous opportunities in medium to short time horizons. Pietralata becomes a kind of opportunistic and cynical Coney Island of delirious New York (Koolhaas, 1978) for the city of Rome.

The plan welcomes art installations, community workshops, or ecological zones, transforming the "unfinished" state of the sites into a space rich in opportunities and possibilities for engagement, both for local groups of residents and metropolitan urbanites. This approach "lightly" reorganizes the physical space making visible the larger political, economic, and social forces reflected in these "interrupted" urban spaces. Yet, the realization of these interventions poses significant challenges, as residents may view temporary adaptations as inadequate compared to their expectations for lasting stability and integration. Nonetheless, the case of Pietralata illustrates how Rotturaforma's dialogic approach of transformative repair to disruptions can offer new opportunities even where chaos and ineptitude seem to prevail.

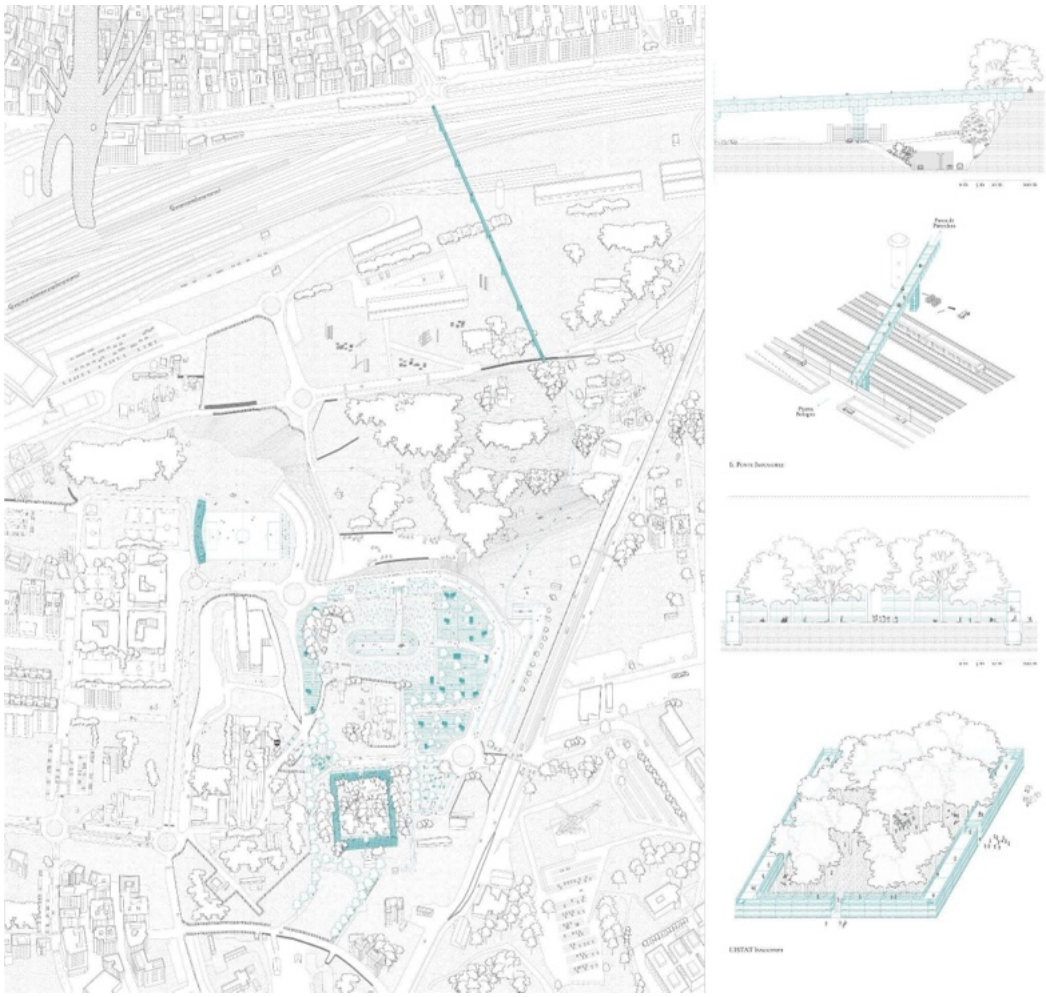

Figure 4. Design exploration Pietralata. (credits: Elisa Bacilieri, Silvia Farano, Barbara Judith Salzano, Justine Hesse, 2024)

The two case studies illustrate how Rotturaforma transforms urban disruptions into opportunities for reimagining space. The emphasis on engaging directly with disruptions fosters a sense of ownership and agency also within local groups. However, alternatives such as strategic neglect or deliberate decay could also offer meaningful responses. For instance, allowing certain spaces to decay might highlight the impermanence of urban infrastructure, emphasizing cycles of change rather than stasis.

4. A laboratory of urban innovation to stand urban fragility

This paper is an attempt to highlight the potential of urban disruption–typically seen as an unwanted event—as a condition of *transformation* and an opportunity for urban innovation. Drawing on Bloch's principle of hope, it contends that urban disruption can serve as a catalyst for new ways of thinking about and organizing space, allowing us to reimagine the urban project through moments of discontinuity and rupture. Rather than merely restoring or replacing what is broken, urban disruption offers a space for experimentation, inviting creative and adaptive responses that challenge the conventional paradigms of prompt repair and replacement.

A central concept of Blochian hope is the “not-yet.” According to Bloch (1986), reality is incomplete and in the process of becoming, and human beings are projected into a future that has not yet happened; it is a projective force that drives one to actively seek a better future. This feeling in the idea of Rotturaforma becomes the force that generates and pushes one to project spatial configurations that are concrete or at other times appear unrealistic. This is due to the fact that delving into the rupture requires not remaining passive to the initial and present state, but instead desiring and directing the mind towards possible future arrangements that are certainly different from what they were before the break-up. The transformations brought about by the disruption are not obliterated. The project becomes the result of active actions and forces operating in an open field of possibilities. It is not a matter of waiting for a change but of imagining it and designing it, of making it concrete and recounting it.

Urban disruptions—whether caused by the breakdown of infrastructure, unexpected natural events, or daily decay—introduce a form of discontinuity that forces us to confront the fragility of urban systems. The hidden forces and complex interdependencies that underpin modern life appear as an open field of possibility. In this sense, the urban space can be understood as a *laboratory of innovation*, where disruptions are not simply obstacles to be overcome but opportunities to rethink the relationships between human and nonhuman forces, materials, and infrastructures. This creative potential is the central idea behind Rotturaforma, a framework that proposes engaging with urban disruption dialectically, treating it as a generative force rather than something to be swiftly repaired or ignored.

The two examples of Rotturaforma show how this approach can work in practice. By examining specific disruptions in Rome, the projects reveal how engaging with the causes and forces behind urban breakdowns can lead to new spatial configurations that align more closely with the dynamic, unpredictable nature of the urban entanglement. The interventions suggest that embracing disruption rather than resisting it allows for the creation of urban spaces that are more adaptable.

While presenting significant potential for urban innovation, Rotturaforma is not without its limitations. One of the primary challenges lies in its *time-consuming nature*. Unlike traditional approaches that aim to restore normalcy as quickly as possible, Rotturaforma requires a slow, labour-intensive, deliberate process of engagement with disruption, allowing time for understanding, adaptation, and creative reinterpretation. The outcomes of this approach are not immediate, and in some cases, they may never fully materialise. The uncertainty inherent in this process reflects the *uncertain and variable nature of contemporary urban life*, where change can occur suddenly or evolve over long periods of time. This slow pace of response may generate frustration and clash with the cultural tendency to seek quick and permanent fixes, making it difficult for Rotturaforma to gain widespread acceptance. Furthermore, *cultural resistance* to embracing disruption as a design principle—rather than something to be corrected—remains a significant barrier to its implementation. This resistance highlights the need for greater public awareness and engagement with the concept of urban fragility.

To respond to these limitations, the future of Rotturaforma must involve a deeper exploration of how to *navigate the fragility* of urban space. The continuous decay and renewal of cities like Rome, where historical grandeur coexists with everyday breakdowns, highlight the need for an urban vision that is *open to uncertainty* and capable of accommodating the cycles of life and death that shape urban environments. The next steps in this exploration must involve developing new methods for working with disruption that can operate within this fragile and evolving territory. This will require an ongoing *process of adaptation*, where urbanists and designers must anticipate change while also embracing the unpredictable nature of the forces they encounter.

Further research is needed to explore the potential for coexistence and metamorphosis in urban spaces. As urban landscapes increasingly become sites of transition and experimentation, there is a growing need to understand how they can function as *metastable systems*, where different forces are in constant tension and negotiation. Rotturaforma offers a glimpse into this future, but its success will depend on our ability to weave together human and non-human relationships, as well as to work with the fluidity of time and space. By doing so, we may find new ways to live with disruption, transforming it from an obstacle into an integral part of the urban experience.

Contributor statement

The reflections presented in this paper are the result of the collective research efforts of all authors. The introductory paragraph "Rotturaforma" is attributed to Marco Ranzato; the second paragraph, "Inhabitation of disruption and transformative repair", to Riccardo Ruggeri; the third, “Chasm in Tor de Schiavi and construction site in Pietralata”, to Flavia Rizzuto; and the concluding paragraph, “A laboratory of urban innovation to stand urban fragility”, to Ilaria Maurelli.

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